Commentary

October 2005

Israel After Disengagement

Hillel Halkin

Mao Lives

Arthur Waldron

Jews and the Jewish Birthrate

Jack Wertheimer

Justice to Pissarro

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Iraq and the Conservatives

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Why They Don't Write 'em Like They Used To

Terry Teachout

Books in Review

Jon D. Levenson • *Daniel Johnson* • *Bruce S. Thornton*
Jonathan R. Cohen • *Dan Seligman*

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Commentary

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Commentary
October 2005

Letters from Readers

Ending Life

To the Editor:

The gratuitously violent title of Paul McHugh's article sets the tone for an unbalanced analysis of the Terri Schiavo case that typifies so much of the hyperbole and misinformation that have pervaded the public debate about it ["Annihilating Terri Schiavo," June].

Dr. McHugh characterizes the "persistent vegetative state" (PVS) of patients like Terri Schiavo as "human life under altered neurological circumstances." This sanitizes the permanent and devastating neurological symptoms of PVS, in which even an ostensibly awake patient is completely unaware of his environment.

Dr. McHugh then equates the cessation of unwanted life-support treatment with actions by physicians that "aim to kill." But there is a subtle and vital distinction between ceasing treatment at a patient's behest and, say, administering a lethal dose of morphine. This distinction was affirmed in the 1990 *Cruzan* case in which the Supreme Court ruled that an "incompetent" patient had the right to decline life-saving medical treatment through surrogates or through clear and convincing evidence that this had been his wish. At the time, there was no public outcry about a "culture of death."

Most disturbingly, Dr. McHugh sets up a straw-man in Michael Schiavo, implying that he viewed his wife's condition as "life unworthy of life"—terminology Dr. McHugh borrows from pre-Nazi Germany. I do not recall seeing this despicable term applied to Terri Schiavo, but I do recall Michael Schiavo stating repeatedly that his wife had wished not to be kept alive indefinitely in a severely brain-damaged state.

Here, Dr. McHugh might have focused on an issue that deserves more attention and that can well be viewed as troubling by dispassionate critics. In the end, the basis for the removal of Terri Schiavo's feeding tube came down to some offhanded comments she was said to have made years earlier after visiting a relative on life-support and while watching a television program about terminal illness. Whether or not the utterances of a healthy woman in her twenties should carry such legal weight is a matter for legitimate debate. But Dr. McHugh seems to call into question the entire notion of patient autonomy, suggesting that whether or not to be kept alive in a permanent state of unconsciousness is a decision best left to well-meaning physicians.

Finally, Dr. McHugh takes a swipe at bioethics. He posits the existence of two warring classes, bioethicists and medical practitioners, noting that the former are "generally shunned by doctors and nurses." It might surprise him to learn that in many hospitals one person serves both functions. I myself have been practicing pulmonology for 32 years and have been doing bioethics consultations in my academic medical center for the last ten years.

In both capacities, I view the sanctity of life as one of the pillars of the practice of medicine. There is no "culture of death" at my hospital. But the increasing sophistication of modern medicine has meant that there frequently are difficult, gut-wrenching decisions that have to be made about the course of a patient's treatment. In this regard, the two hats I wear are often of assistance to patients, families, fellow physicians, and nurses.

I do not share Dr. McHugh's view of the nefarious impact of bioethics and an imagined "culture of death" on our society. The Schiavo case was a perfect storm in which a unique convergence of factors—involving medical ethics, law, family dynamics, and political alliances—produced a

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family tragedy and a media circus. But our country has weathered the storm.

KENNETH PRAGER, M.D.
Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

Paul McHugh, a preeminent scholar and clinician in neuropsychiatry, argues that Terri Schiavo met "annihilation" at the hands of a "culture of death." He contrasts this with the "culture of life" that is sustained by humane physicians, nurses, and hospice staff.

As a physician specializing in psychiatry, I find such Manichean divisions unhelpful. In my view, the physician's duty is to engage in a difficult, ongoing dialectic between traditional medical ethics and the specific wishes, hopes, and directives of a particular patient. The former includes such core precepts as "First, do no harm" and "Treat the sick and injured with compassion." The latter may extend to anything from the use of psychotropic medications during a psychotic episode to so-called living wills.

Unfortunately, physicians have only faint guideposts to lead them toward a humane resolution of this dialectic. The American Medical Association charges doctors to "respect human life and the dignity of every individual." But does "human life" refer simply to physiochemical processes like those involved in cardiac function, or to life in the larger sense of willful, reasoning personhood? Does the "dignity" of every individual obligate the physician to preserve human life under all circumstances and irrespective of the expressed wishes of the patient, or does dignity sometimes allow for the removal of life-prolonging devices from a severely brain-damaged person who has made it clear that he would not want to be kept alive in such a state? Nobody should pretend to have easy answers to these questions.

Dr. McHugh is worried about "the increasingly assertive deprecation of medical expertise and understanding in favor of patients' 'autonomous' decision-making" and about the intrusion into the medical process of "bioethicists" who lack a foundation in the everyday realities of medical practice. I share these concerns, but I do not go with him in assuming that "no document on earth can substitute for the one-on-one judgment . . . of a sensible, humane, and experienced physician."

Consider a document like the do-not-resuscitate (DNR) order, which for Dr. McHugh is one of the "signposts of our culture of death." Recently, I was involved in the care of a very elderly patient with severe end-stage cardiac disease. His experienced geriatrician had recommended that he sign a DNR order, explaining that at his age, cardiac resuscitation usually led to substantial cognitive impairment and a poor quality of life. The patient elected to sign, and I concurred. Had he been a twenty-year-old with no progressive disease of any kind, I am quite sure I would have recommended against his signing. One life is not "worth more" than the other, but the medical facts, prognosis, and human context differ markedly between the two scenarios.

We doctors struggle with determinations in cases like these not because we are bullied by bioethicists but because we are physicians, and because there is no "culture"—of life or of death—that can substitute for the judicious weighing of general ethical imperatives against the specific directives of an individual patient.

RONALD PIES, M.D.
Tufts University Medical Center
Boston, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR:

Paul McHugh's tendentious article misstates much about Terri Schiavo's medical condition, the care she was given, and the legal battle that surrounded her demise.

First, Dr. McHugh draws a specious analogy between Terri Schiavo's "persistent vegetative state" (PVS) before her death and the condition of "Dr. A," a patient he attended to some four decades ago. Though Dr. A had suffered a grievous brain injury, after which he "gave little evidence of awareness," on one extraordinary occasion he showed that he was able to receive sensory input, process it, and articulate a coherent response. In sharp contrast, Terri Schiavo showed no signs of consciousness over the course of fifteen years, never responding to stimuli other than reflexively.

Dr. A was sentient, Terri Schiavo was not. It is wrong and seriously misleading for Dr. McHugh to describe her as "apathetic to inner needs and external events," or to attribute her contractures to "apathy"—as though these things could have been helped. Nor can PVS patients be said to display "a lowered state of vigilance," since *any* degree of vigilance, however minimal, would preclude a diagnosis of PVS.

Within five weeks of her cardiac arrest in 1990, Terri Schiavo had three CAT scans, then another in 1996, and another in 2002. These tests showed massive destruction of brain structures necessary for consciousness (as against mere reflexive opening of the eyes). Dr. McHugh finds it surprising that no functional assessment of her surviving cerebral tissue was performed. Actually, a structural MRI was done five months after her cardiac arrest, but after an experimental deep-brain stimulator was implanted later that year, no MRI of any kind could be done.

Contrary to what Dr. McHugh writes, Terri Schiavo's electroencephalograms (EEG) were not "typical of a patient with severely impaired consciousness"; fewer than 5 percent of PVS patients have the extreme abnormality of her isoelectric ("flatline") EEG. If Dr. McHugh knows of anyone with such structural and functional abnormalities whose condition subsequently improved significantly, he should bring it to the world's attention. Otherwise, he should stop hinting that additional neuroimaging might have shown that Terri Schiavo's brain "tissue was recovering over time" and that her condition was other than permanent.

Dr. McHugh finds it troubling that in Terri Schiavo's last days, "all—hospice staff, parents, siblings, onlookers—were forbidden by court order to give her food or drink orally," and that her parents were not permitted "to feed her by mouth as one would any helpless per-

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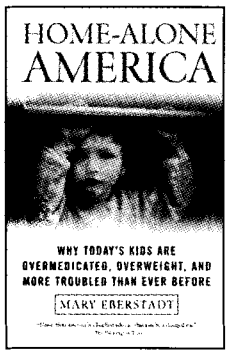

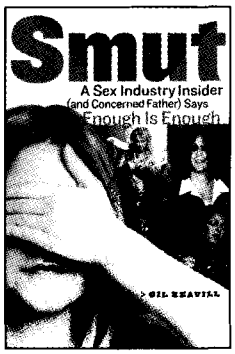

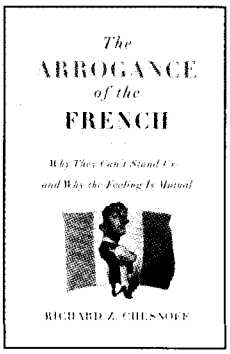

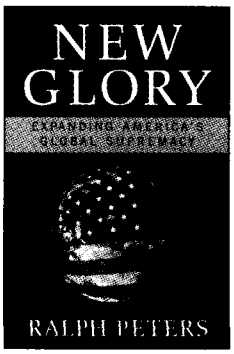

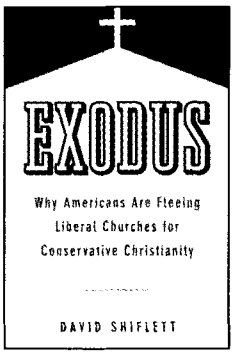

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son." But the reason Terri Schiavo had to be fed through a gastric tube was that she was unable to swallow normally without risk of aspiration and pneumonia. Feeding by mouth would probably have hastened rather than postponed her death—an opinion shared by the treating doctors and by the medical examiner who performed her autopsy.

Dr. McHugh decries the fact that Terri Schiavo was "judicially prohibited" from being given "even a chip of ice to relieve the pain of a parched mouth and throat," with "local sheriffs . . . alerted to prevent it." But surely he knows that there can be no feeling, including the registering of pain, without sentience.

One of us examined Terri Schiavo, reporting his findings in court testimony and subsequently in a detailed article in a medical journal. Both of us believe in the paramount importance of getting the fundamental facts right, upon which all discussions of ethics and law must be predicated. The true and tragic facts of her case do not fit Dr. McHugh's apprehension of "life under altered circumstances" being led down a slippery slope to "life unworthy of life."

M. LOUIS OFFEN, M.D.
Rockville, Maryland

RONALD E. CRANFORD, M.D.
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, Minnesota

TO THE EDITOR:

As a physician with ten years' experience in nursing-home and hospice care, I take issue with some of Paul McHugh's assertions. Dr. McHugh writes that "the way [Terri Schiavo] died was most unusual"; that is not so. Many hospice patients with end-stage dementia and other consciousness-impairing neurological diseases die from dehydration due to the inability or refusal to eat or drink. If the patient is provided with proper oral care, this is not an uncomfortable way to die.

Contrary to what Dr. McHugh suggests, Terri Schiavo could not have taken fluids orally after her gastric tube was removed. She would have choked and aspirated, and would have appeared to be suffering. Since successive neurologists believed that she lacked the capacity to feel pain, it is false and almost defamatory to state of her husband and his advisers that "they were willing to have her suffer pain."

LOUISE BENSON, M.D.
Broomfield, Colorado

TO THE EDITOR:

Paul McHugh suggests that MRI or PET scans would have demonstrated whether any neuronal activity persisted in Terri Schiavo's brain and whether any cerebral tissue was recovering. These tools help physicians make clinical decisions when further evidence may be of value. But in Terri Schiavo's case, the presence of neuronal activity would not have changed the fact that she had suffered a devastating brain injury, significantly altering her quality of life and leaving her in a persistent vegetative state (PVS).

At present, neither of those high-tech and expensive tests is required to predict the possibility of tissue recovery in a case like Terri Schiavo's; once a central-nervous-system neuron is dead, it remains so permanently. As Dr. McHugh himself points out, patients in PVS "for more than eighteen months are generally unlikely to recover"; after fifteen years it is completely reasonable to come to this conclusion without the assistance of ancillary tests.

Since Dr. McHugh's article was published, the results of Terri Schiavo's autopsy have come out. They counter his statement that she was starved to death; according to the coroner, she died of dehydration. To be sure, neither the one nor the other sounds like a preferred way to die. But the feeling of hunger—if a neurologically devastated individual feels it at all—subsides after several hours. Medical literature also suggests that prolonged starvation leads to the release of natural substances in the bloodstream, producing a euphoric state that reduces discomfort at the end of life. If, as Dr. McHugh suggests, Terri Schiavo was indeed not provided with ice chips, moist sponges, or glycerin swabs once the decision was made to forgo assisted nutrition, then her treatment did not rise to the current standard of palliative care.

But it is not up to physicians like Dr. McHugh or myself to determine the *path* of care for our patients. These decisions must be made whenever possible by the patient and, barring that option, by a surrogate who adheres to the patient's wishes. A physician's role is to inform the decision-maker of all possible options, along with their associated risks and benefits, and then to respect the decision even if it contravenes his own beliefs. If we are unable to do so, we must step aside and allow someone who is comfortable with the chosen course to assume the patient's care.

ADAM RAPOPORT, M.D.
Toronto, Canada

TO THE EDITOR:

In writing that "the overarching principle that hospice doctors and nurses strive to represent and exemplify is never to betray a patient to death," Paul McHugh apparently does not consider that a patient can be also be "betrayed" to a life he does not want to live. Insofar as is possible, the way a person dies should be consistent with his values. Other people should respect him by doing what they can to preserve his integrity and his sense of identity. When he is beyond self-command, his agents, insofar as reason and ability allow, should fulfill his purposes according to his standards.

Dr. McHugh's contention that nothing can substitute for the "one-on-one judgment, fallible as it may ultimately be, of a sensible, humane, and experienced physician" is more than a little self-serving. Only medical experts assure us that it is legitimate to substitute medical expertise for moral judgment. Indeed, people have entrusted me with living wills and health-care proxies precisely in order to prevent well-intentioned physicians who do not distinguish between bodies and persons from zealously keeping them alive in conditions that they scorn.

ROBERT HOFFMAN
City University of New York
Jamaica, New York

TO THE EDITOR:

One need only have read the inflammatory title of

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Ross Miller, *editor*

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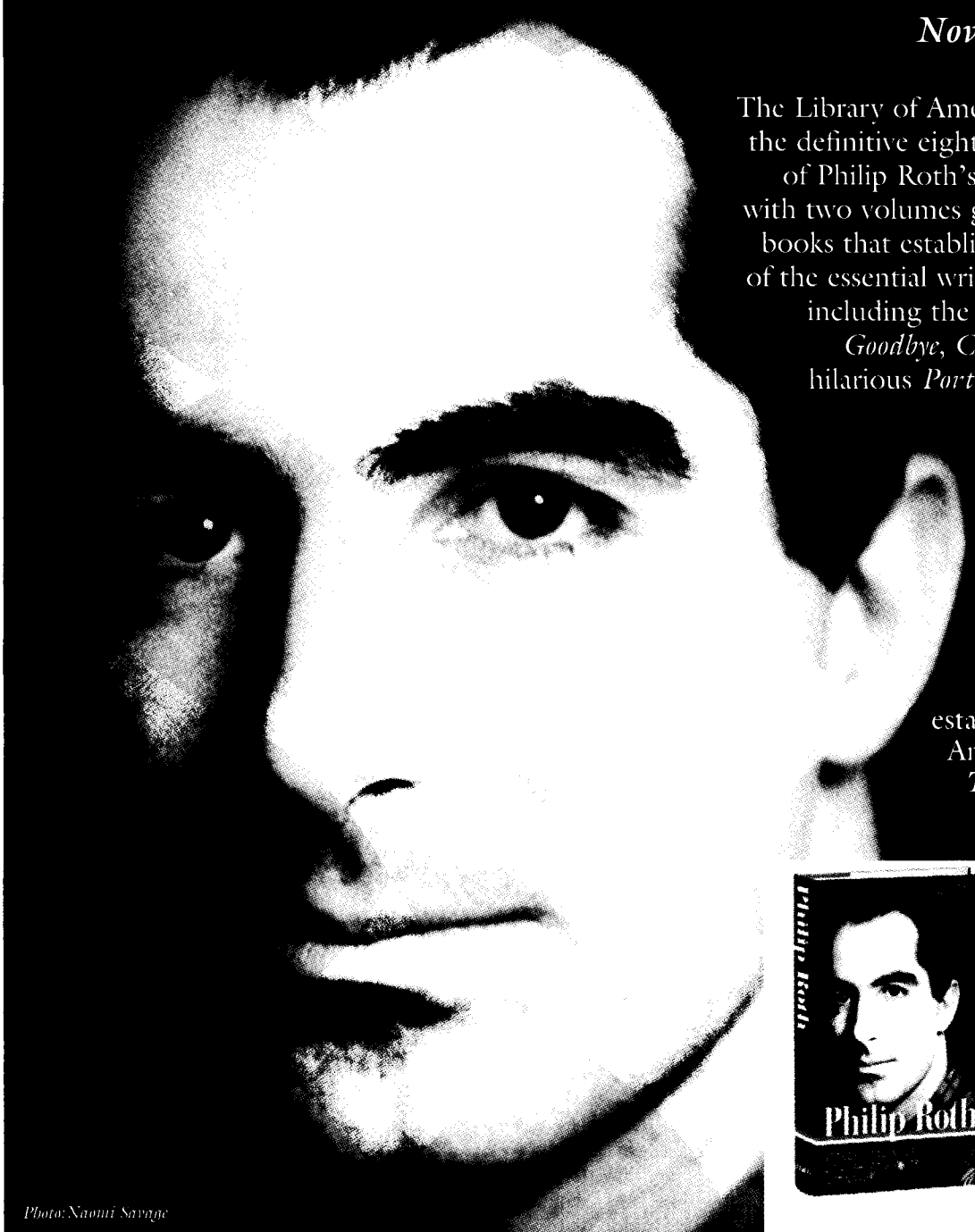

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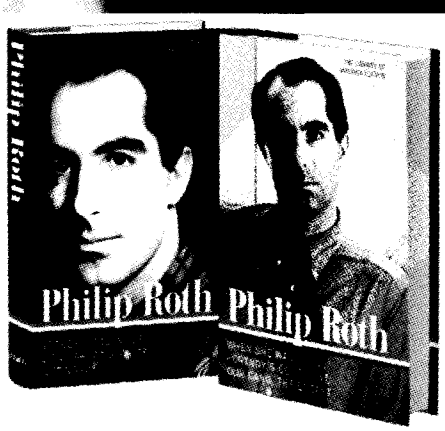

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Paul McHugh's article to know that the text would lack any pretense to objectivity. Dr. McHugh asserts that after Terri Schiavo's gastric tube was removed, she died "within thirteen distress-filled days." Unless Dr. McHugh was in Schiavo's hospice room during her last days, he has no basis for this statement.

Most disturbingly, Dr. McHugh bemoans the fact that patients have become empowered to choose among their treatment options—or to choose none. He may be nostalgic for the paternalistic era when "doctor knew best," but the explosion of interest in living wills in the wake of the Schiavo tragedy suggests that he has precious little company.

LONNY BENAMY
Brooklyn, New York

TO THE EDITOR:

Paul McHugh has written an insightful and poignant essay about our culture's attitudes toward life and death. I share his disgust with the legal wrangling over Terri Schiavo's fate. How did we reach this point where we are so fascinated with death, or look at it so cheaply, that no solution short of ensuring a slow death could be found within the law? Perhaps this is a simplistic or superficial answer, but I trace our society's callous view of death to the Holocaust, when the techniques of modern science were first applied to the death process.

I take issue with one point that Dr. McHugh raises. He asserts that it is the sensible, humane, and experienced physician—and not the ethicist—who possesses the "one-on-one judgment, fallible as it may ultimately be," to care for a patient at crucial moments in the dying process. But how many doctors nowadays have the kind of relationship with their patients that would generate the proper insight and understanding? Besides, the doctors closest to a person at the end of life tend to be specialists only recently called to the scene, with no sense of who a patient was prior to his final illness.

DAVID LENTZ
West Orange, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR:

Language is at our disposal, but it also disposes of us; the way we talk creates the setting in which we conduct our moral calculus. Paul McHugh's analysis of the Terri Schiavo illustrates this in a number of ways.

First and foremost, Dr. McHugh's dramatic personal testimony about the submerged remains of consciousness in a patient with a condition not unlike Terri Schiavo's is important both clinically and ethically. Second, his dissection of the term "persistent vegetative state" is a warning about how a single formula can be clinically accurate and at the same time subtly stretch moral possibilities. Finally, by calling attention to the chilling historical parallels between the Schiavo case and the bizarre, oxymoronic title of the 1920 German work *Die Greigabe der Vernichtung Lebensunwertes Leben* ("Lifting Constraints from the Annihilation of Life Unworthy of Life"), Dr. McHugh helps restore our own medical-moral talk to its first function as truth-telling.

Of course, the case of Terri Schiavo is awful and complex. But the understandable fear of the living that their minds could end up trapped and silenced inside a damaged body should not be what determines the outcome of cases like hers. Here is where the story of Dr. McHugh's patient is important. In response to Dr. McHugh's own voice at his bedside, this man with a damaged brain uttered a perfectly precise sentence—and then never spoke again. This is a cautionary tale. It makes us skeptical about what are still crude scientific measurements of human consciousness. It suggests that, rather than impose the gruesome imagination of the living upon those in "altered neurological states" ("I wouldn't want to be in that condition and have all that attention and expense!"), doctors, family members, and the law should strive as much as possible to follow the Hippocratic Oath.

At what point do we judge that a person is no longer present in his or her body? Cases of severe dementia, last-stage Alzheimer's, and massive brain injuries raise difficult questions. These are still unsettled issues. Yet we do know a person is someone with a history (even if plaque in the brain has destroyed his own access to it), someone who has been in relationships with others (even if he can no longer communicate with them), and someone who is alive (even if only by the aid of a machine). Beyond this, a person is a living entity to whom we accord certain kinds of respect and treatment. For a long time, Terri Schiavo was accorded the care that implied she was a person. Once she was cortically de-personalized, she could be dehydrated and starved to death.

Dr. McHugh has done caregivers for future Terri Schiavos—and all of us—a very humane service.

ROBERT F. LEAVITT, S.S.
St. Mary's Seminary and University
Baltimore, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR:

As one who recently lost a beloved companion to cancer after fending off periodic attempts by third parties to end her life, and who would have gladly given years of his own life to see hers prolonged—if only for a few days, and even in her final, semi-vegetative state—I was deeply upset by the Terri Schiavo case.

Things have really gone topsy-turvy when a government that purports to act in defense of human life, and with due respect for rational will, in fact does the opposite. In the case of a mentally sound person who wishes to die—such as one suffering from persistent pain or just pervaded by tedium vitae—government not only ignores his will but endeavors actively to block its implementation. Yet when it came to Terri Schiavo, who found herself as defenseless as any human being can possibly be, government not only failed to protect her but actively participated in taking her life.

Oh, yes, Terri Schiavo is said to have expressed her will to die rather than live in a vegetative state. But this justification reflects a deep misunderstanding of the nature and expression of rational will. The courts knew of Terri Schiavo's will only through her husband's uncorroborated statements. With a human life at stake, one would expect a third party's assertions to be subjected to the most stringent scrutiny and denied any weight absent incontro-

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vertible supporting evidence. Yet the courts were prepared to find cause for the imposition of a death sentence in such naked assertions.

Even if we accept at face value Michael Schiavo's characterization of his wife's will, no person's decision about the termination of his own life can be called rational when it is made at an undetermined distance from the moment it will actually be implemented—and if, at that moment, it cannot be revoked. Let us consider a circumstance like that in which Terri Schiavo was said to have expressed her "will." Seeing on television a person fed by tubes, or carried miserably in a wheelchair, the viewer says, "I'd never want to live like that." He might even be moved to express this in writing. How can he know that he will have the same attitude at a moment when his neurological state is radically different?

Dismally, the courts fail to accord this obvious paradox anything approaching the importance it merits. Yet it is the subject of a simple story penned a century ago by the Nobel laureate Luigi Pirandello. A man strolling in the park with his wife sees a stroke victim being led around in a wheelchair, and says: "I would never want to live in that condition." A year later, he himself is felled by a stroke. As he is led in a wheelchair to the park in his vegetative state, he begins to feel—without being able to manifest it—the wonder of life, which he appreciates even more than he did in health and which he now clings to desperately. Fortunately for him, his society neither offered living wills nor dangled before his wife the possibility of securing his state-sanctioned annihilation.

MAURO LUCENTINI
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

Paul McHugh's cool and reasoned reading of the Terri Schiavo case is a welcome relief from the political hue and cry that has surrounded this sad story. I wish to point out one small, inconsequential mistake in his article, perhaps a mere typographical error. He writes: "No functional assessment of her surviving cerebral tissue was performed by means of magnetic-resonance imaging (MRI) or proton-emission tomography (PET)." *Proton*? Protons are perfectly stable particles; were they to be emitted from our bodies, we would all disappear in short order. Dr. McHugh is referring to positrons, the antiparticles of the more familiar electrons. Positrons are positively charged, and they disappear in a flash when encountering (negatively charged) electrons because the latter are so much more abundant in the cosmos.

Positron-emission tomography is itself a bit of a misnomer, leading to the common belief, even in the medical profession, that positrons are emitted inside the body and detected by outside instruments. Actually, positrons so rapidly encounter electrons that they travel no more than about two millimeters inside the human body before being annihilated, thereby emitting highly energetic gamma rays. The gamma radiation is what the medical devices detect. The term "positron-emission tomography" was coined because the words "annihilation" and "gamma rays" were too frightening to patients. The same sort of euphemistic substitution is responsible for the "MRI," which refers to a procedure that used to be known as NMR, or *nuclear*-magnetic resonance.

DIDIER DE FONTAINE
University of California
Berkeley, California

PAUL MCHUGH writes:

An impressive feature of the Terri Schiavo case was the zealous public support that gathered behind her husband's wish that she die. Some of my correspondents' letters reflect that zeal; they deserve careful examination for the light they shed on the increasingly intrusive fact that ending a life, like living a life, has more than a purely private meaning.

Kenneth Prager's letter is rather confusing. He seems at first to be of the opinion that Terri Schiavo was getting "unwanted" treatment; then he acknowledges that his basis for holding that opinion—namely, a number of "offhand" comments allegedly uttered by the young Terri Schiavo—is "a matter for legitimate debate." Indeed: that debate is at the heart of the matter.

Dr. Prager also denies there was any "aim to kill" behind the efforts to deny food and drink to Terri Schiavo. But if that was not the aim, why were sheriffs brought in to guarantee that she got no fluids? In a spirit of compromise, I am willing to amend my statement and say that the aim was to make sure Terri Schiavo died. Is that a distinction with a difference?

More interesting to me is that Dr. Prager describes his work as "wearing two hats." Here is my question to him and to others who play this double role: can they show that their second hat, that of the bioethics consultant, improves the fit of the first, that of the doctor? Until that question is settled by means of something more persuasive than testimonials, I would advise them to stick to being doctors.

Equally confusing is Ronald Pies. He wants to start with the principle of doing no harm. Fine; but how does he square that principle with the way in which Terri Schiavo's life was disposed of? Wrestling with the concept of human life in the presence of debilitating disease or injury, Dr. Pies resists the effort to think through the implications of the term "life under altered circumstances," a standard medical idea since Claude Bernard in the 19th century. He also mistakes as a "concern" of mine what is merely an observation: namely, the "increasingly assertive deprecation of medical expertise and understanding in favor of patients' autonomous decision-making."

Some of my other correspondents confirm the reality of this phenomenon. What actually concerns me, however, is that many doctors have grown wary of offering clinical guidance because they think patients distrust their judgment. Dr. Pies seems to be among those who believe this distrust is warranted; he himself would place his reliance on a document like a do-not-resuscitate (DNR) order. I am dumbfounded by this attitude.

Of all the new practices tied to the effort to support patient "autonomy," DNR orders are probably the most injurious, and known to be

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so. Evidence from nursing journals is particularly telling here, documenting how patients on DNR orders are customarily moved to less accessible places in the hospital and shamefully neglected, becoming in effect non-persons. In short, DNR often translates into "do not care." These documents represent a bad experiment, and should be junked.

M. Louis Offen and Ronald E. Cranford claim that, being closer than I to the Terri Schiavo case, they were better able to "get the fundamental facts right." But they do not deny the most essential facts on which my argument rested. They do not deny that she slept and awoke on schedule, grimaced and groaned with pain, and turned responsively to sounds and touches. Nor, on the other hand, do they report that she was incapable of managing her oral secretions, which apparently she could swallow without difficulty. Nevertheless, they assert that she would have been incapable of swallowing nutrient fluids, and would have injured her lungs in the attempt.

Let us be real. The doctors did not want her fed because they worried about her lungs, but because they believed she was better off in the grave than living in the hospice. Everything else in this letter is simply science-bluffing in lieu of caregiving, and can be safely ignored.

Louise Benson similarly claims that Terri Schiavo could not have taken fluids orally. Was it, then, to avoid aspiration pneumonia that the courts sent police to guarantee that no innocuous ice chips could reach her mouth? I have had even more years of experience than Dr. Benson, but never have I seen a neuropsychiatric patient done to death by government order. Unless Colorado is different from most other states, I doubt that Dr. Benson has, either. Hence my claim that this death in a hospice was "most unusual."

Adam Rapoport and I may seem at first to be engaged in a verbal quibble. I specifically stated that Terri Schiavo "died of dehydration"; he agrees that aspects of her treatment did not rise to "the current standard of palliative care." But we part company definitively when, in his final paragraph, he describes a physician's role as that of "inform[ing] the decision-maker," thereby relinquishing the doctor's tutelary responsibilities.

Patients are not doctors, and they need more than facts, which they can find readily enough on the Internet. What they seek is help in living with the facts, help in the form of guidance, counsel, and support from a person of experience and matured judgment—especially one who will see the problem through with them. If doctors, in response to culture-driven concerns over "paternalism," deny this help to patients, they will leave them naked to their worst fears. Given the overall tenor of Dr. Rapoport's letter, I would like to think that he could be brought to agree with me about this.

Although Robert Hoffman sees me as "self-serving," I clearly stated that medical judgment is fallible. Does he, in turn, concur that clinical decisions provoked by "living wills" are also fallible? If we could get that far, we might then draw closer to the source of these respective fallibilities. With doctors, fallibility arises from lack of experience and/or lack of close attention to telling life details. With living wills, fallibility arises from their legalized rigidity even as life situations change, and attitudes along with them. If we agreed on that point, my next question would be: how can patient care be better improved, by concentrating on the education of doctors or by adding endless new codicils to living wills? I'd bet on the doctors, and I'd expect—hope—to see living wills eventually discredited.

Which brings me to Lonny Benamy, who notes correctly that the media reporting on Terri Schiavo prompted many fearful people to write living wills. That, indeed, was one of the reasons that prompted me to write my own counterreport, which I undertook not out of any nostalgia for the day when "doctor knew best" but out of a hope that readers might talk more with, and learn more from, their doctors—and that they would look for doctors who want to care for them through thick and thin.

In his very thoughtful response, David Lentz observes that such doctors are now hard to find, and that most people go from specialist to specialist in the course of their illnesses, particularly their terminal ones. Needless to say, I deplore this state of affairs, which perhaps more than any other has opened the door to new and chilly specialists in ending life. I can only say that I know many doctors—neuropsychiatrists and oncologists especially, but many others as well—who provide exactly the kind of long-term care I describe, and I hope that if he or someone close to him needs such a physician, we will always be able to find one for him.

Father Robert F. Leavitt and Mauro Lucentini could obviously have written better than I on this whole subject. It is clear that they understood my essay from the ground up, and I thank them for their efforts to enlarge upon its message. I also thank Didier de Fontaine for his kind comments and for his clear demonstration of how the use of abbreviations can often lead to embarrassment. I have sat through hour-long lectures on PET's and MRI's and learned less than what he taught in 238 words.

Realism

TO THE EDITOR:

Charles Krauthammer alleges that after September 11, "many realists were brought to acknowledge the poverty of realism," but his description of the "realist" perspective on foreign policy is not one that most realists would recognize ["The Neoconservative Convergence," July-August].

Mr. Krauthammer's statement that "the classic shortcoming of realism" is "a failure of imagination" is hard to take seriously. Leaders like Benjamin Disraeli, Otto von Bismarck, Henry Kissinger, and Richard Nixon had no shortage of imagination or vision. His notion that realists are "centered on the illusion of stability and equilibrium" is an oversimplification at best. This charge was frequently made against the Nixon-Kissinger team in the 1970's,

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when for a period of time the United States was preoccupied with Vietnam and on the defensive elsewhere. But even then, Nixon and Kissinger were not afraid to use brutal force or to put American forces on global alert to outmaneuver the Soviets in the Middle East.

Realists throughout history have been second to none in pursuing robust foreign policies, including preemptive attacks when the potential benefits have justified the costs. Many realists did not oppose the invasion of Iraq. Indeed, Kissinger and James Schlesinger supported the war clearly and publicly. I myself wrote in February 2003 that "the path to war is not only inevitable but desirable." This opinion was not based strictly on the belief that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction but rather on the view that a policy of containment was unsustainable after 9/11 and that, accordingly, the Iraq situation had to be resolved by force.

What most realists (myself included) opposed was not the defeat and removal of Saddam Hussein, but making a grand democracy-building project in Iraq into a paramount objective of American foreign policy at a time when we face other major challenges. By now it is clear that the administration and its neoconservative supporters grossly underestimated the cost and complexity of building a democratic Iraq.

The dispute between neoconservatives and realists (and there are obviously varied perspectives in each group) is not about whether "the desire for freedom is indeed universal and not the private preserve of Westerners." Henry Kissinger, a refugee from the Nazis and the dean of contemporary realists, certainly believes firmly in the virtues of democracy. And I know from many personal conversations that Richard Nixon always viewed the cold war as more than a struggle against a rival superpower; it was also a war to protect and expand the free world.

But even if the desire for freedom is universal, that does not mean that all people prefer freedom at all times under all circumstances. Those of us who live in mature democracies are prepared to sacrifice some of our freedoms for security—physical, economic, and otherwise. Those with less security than we enjoy may be willing to give up more of their freedom. Moreover, democracy is not a panacea against terrorism. If it were, there would have been no Atlanta or Oklahoma bombings and no recent attacks in London.

Both sides of the political spectrum want simple explanations for terrorism, whether it is the Left's belief in the suffering of the Palestinians and America's imperial foreign policy or the Right's new myth that terrorism is a result of the lack of freedom in the Arab world. But extremist Islamist terrorists are not asking for the right to be heard—they want to create a Muslim caliphate and to impose their own practices on the societies in which they live. And while liberalization of the Arab world would probably slow terrorist recruiting, trying to impose democracy by force in places where it has no history, where minority rights are not protected, and where tribal mistrust runs deep may generate more terrorism rather than less.

I am glad that Mr. Krauthammer understands the need to be selective and to define priorities in our foreign-policy objectives. I hope that he is one of the neoconservatives who have been "mugged by reality" and see that while policy without convictions is defensive and empty, policy based on blind faith—even if it is faith in the righteous cause of democracy—may have unintended and devastating consequences. Clearly, some have not yet come to this conclusion. One hopes that their education will not be too costly for them and the rest of us.

DIMITRI K. SIMES
Nixon Center
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR:

Charles Krauthammer offers a systematic and judicious review of the evolutionary character of neoconservatism, reminding us of its unheralded success while at the same time belying the caricatures of its critics. I would add only a small note.

Mr. Krauthammer cites my article in the May COMMENTARY, "The Bush Doctrine's Next Test," and suggests that I advocate "going after" the "three principal Islamic autocracies: Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan." "Not so fast" is his reply; "relentless and ruthless means" are "better applied to enemies."

Though my suggestions for encouraging the evolution of Middle-Eastern countries toward democracy might be characterized as "relentless," I did not advocate "ruthless" means, and certainly not the use of American military force against our autocratic allies. Just the opposite: as I wrote, we should apply multifaceted pressures and incentives—with candor, tact, and firmness—to Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan. Such policies are the only way to avoid implosions in those countries—as in Iran in 1979 or Lebanon and Algeria in the 1980's—while at the same time remaining true to our ongoing sacrifices for democracy in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Indeed, Secretary of State Rice's address to the American University at Cairo on June 20, 2005 was a model of this consistent approach to our recalcitrant friends. She duly noted the limitations of past American realism: "For 60 years, my country, the United States, pursued stability at the expense of democracy in this region here in the Middle East—and we achieved neither. Now, we are taking a different course." While noting our "strategic relationship" with Egypt and praising the "wisdom and counsel" of President Mubarak, she refused to back away from tough talk of the inevitable reform ahead. As she said, "The Egyptian government must fulfill the promise it has made to its people—and to the entire world—by giving its citizens the freedom to choose."

VICTOR DAVIS HANSON
Hoover Institution
Stanford, California

TO THE EDITOR:

Charles Krauthammer correctly argues that neoconservatism has matured into a governing ideology over the last four years. Many of its opponents have

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accepted its basic rationale for the war in Iraq: to establish democracy there and inspire Arabs across the Middle East to do the same. If that does not indicate a neoconservative triumph, I do not know what does.

Mr. Krauthammer attributes this ideological realignment to a "compromise with reality, and a convergence to the middle." But questions remain. If what he calls "democratic realism" leaves room for friendly dictatorships in the Middle East, then how do we draw the line with respect to currently friendly but potentially adversarial nations like China and Russia? At what point does his own brand of neoconservatism cease to be neoconservative?

Mr. Krauthammer also fails to mention that while the neoconservative camp has indeed grown, several prominent conservative figures have jumped ship and have yet to reboard, at least not publicly. The list of wobblers and defectors is not limited to David Brooks and Francis Fukuyama, for it also includes William F. Buckley, Jr., who told the *New York Times* in 2004 that "[i]f I knew [before the war] what I know now about what kind of situation we would be in, I would have opposed the war"; George F. Will, who called for "a dose of conservatism without the prefix"; Tucker Carlson, who called the war "a major mistake"; and Owen Harries, who described neoconservatism as "profoundly unconservative." Does not the absence of their support put a dent in the Right—and in Mr. Krauthammer's thesis of "convergence"?

WINDSOR MANN
Washington, D.C.

CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER writes:

If I understand Dimitri K. Simes correctly, he is saying that the realist position on the war in Iraq is that we should have invaded, yes, but instead of "imposing democracy" we should have simply substituted a more pliant Baathist thug for Saddam Hussein.

Of all the possible policies one could have adopted toward Saddam's Iraq, this is the most absurd. It is absurd to risk American blood and treasure simply to perpetuate precisely the same kind of corrupt, corrupting, and ultimately self-defeating support of local thugs that helped create the conditions for 9/11. If that is the objective, far better simply to do nothing, as the liberal isolationists would have it.

The rest of Mr. Simes's letter is so filled with caricatures of neoconservatism that it should have been accompanied by a cartoon. They are hardly worth responding to. I would make only two points.

First, no one is claiming that the absence of democracy is the only cause of Arab-Islamic radicalism. But it certainly is a central cause. Who would deny that the local dictators have provided unending encouragement, support, and even incitement for the kind of anti-Western, anti-Semitic, anti-American Zeitgeist in which bin Ladenism thrived and metastasized?

Second, the idea that neoconservatives were promising some sort of democratic Arab paradise is merely silly. In my own writings I have stressed at every opportunity how difficult, risky, and problematic the enterprise would be. Nonetheless, I came to the conclusion that it was necessary. The question put to Mr. Simes and other realists—what is your alternative policy for fighting Arab/Islamic radicalism, other than going cave to cave in the mountains of Afghanistan and Pakistan?—receives no answer, as Mr. Simes's letter once again confirms.

I did not mean to overstate Victor Davis Hanson's position on Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan. I simply wanted to suggest that these well-argued concerns should be assigned to the second tier for now, at a time when our hands are full in Iraq and when the greatest promise lies in Lebanon and possibly Syria.

Windsor Mann points out that George F. Will, William F. Buckley, Jr., Owen Harries, and several others have either jumped ship or never signed up for the journey. That is perfectly true. I would only emphasize that neither they nor many of the others cruising far over the horizon would take lightly the suggestion that they are neoconservatives. It is, therefore, not surprising that they are not part of the neoconservative convergence. My subject was the convergence of the major strains of neoconservatism—the more idealist and the more realist—into a new governing consensus.

Anti-Semitism

TO THE EDITOR:

I was disappointed by Paul Johnson's article, "The Anti-Semitic Disease" [June]. Mr. Johnson suggests that anti-Semitism is, quite literally, a "disease of the mind." This is essentially a deterministic argument: if anti-Semitism is a disease, there is no personal responsibility, no free will. This is a strange argument coming from one of the great admirers of American freedom. In essence, it is much closer to the brand of Marxism that Mr. Johnson embraced in his youth than to the philosophy of freedom he has so passionately defended over the past three decades.

Mr. Johnson sees Germany as again caught in the grip of this "disease"—now in the form of anti-Americanism—which, he claims, has led to a decline in Germany's fortunes. He offers no proof for this thesis, and one could very well argue that the opposite is true.

Germans will never forget America's help during the cold war and the reunification of their nation. Since then, Germans and Americans have worked side by side to spread freedom and democracy in the Balkans and in Afghanistan. No country has contributed more troops to NATO-led operations than Germany. And we have helped to stabilize Iraq with training programs for Iraqi police and armed forces.

Mr. Johnson's deterministic view of anti-Semitism also leads him to embrace the conspiracy theory of a French "hegemony" over Europe. But the notion that any state "dominates" the European Union shows an astonishing lack of knowledge of contemporary Europe. The reconciliation between Germany and France after centuries of war was one of the key elements in the process of integration. Having sacrificed so much for the cause of peace and freedom in Europe, Amer-

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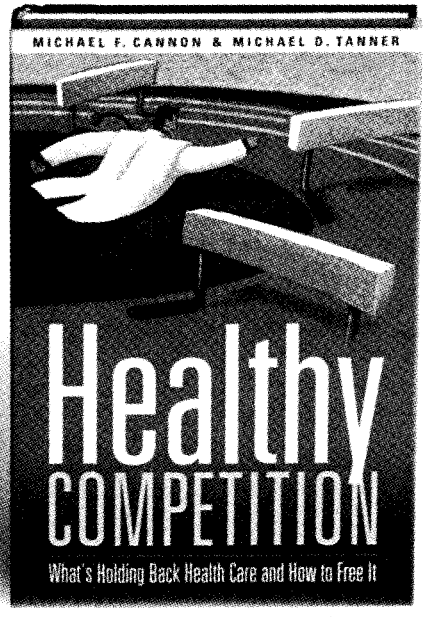

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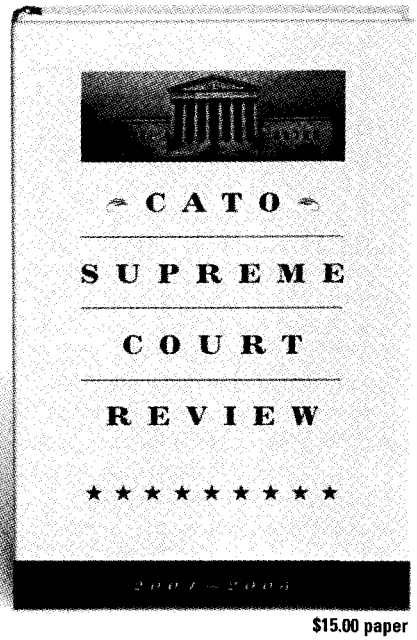

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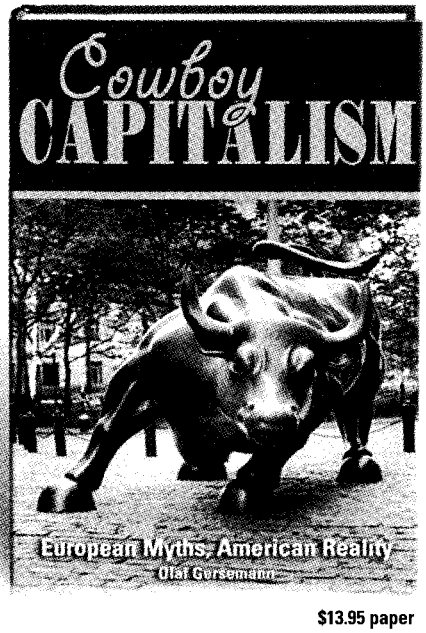

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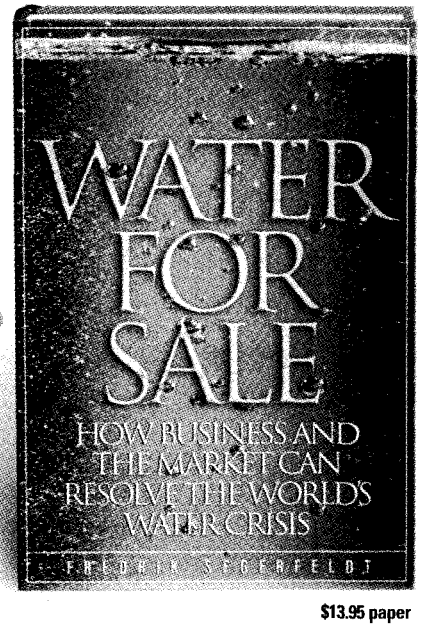

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icans should be the first to recognize that integration has created an extraordinary zone of peace and stability, today encompassing 450 million people.

To support his argument, Mr. Johnson paints a dark picture of the German economy. He fails to see that Germany has taken a number of steps to adjust to the process of globalization. Some important reforms have been implemented; more will follow. Germany has the third largest economy in the world, was the world's biggest exporter in 2004, and is the most important European trading partner of the United States.

Yes, anti-Semitism does exist in Europe (as well as in the United States), as recent data collected by the American Jewish Committee show. In Germany, government and civil society are working together with partners in the U.S. and all over Europe to fight anti-Semitism through education and exchange programs, as well as through law enforcement. We should not let ourselves be distracted from this common cause by indulging in overly simplistic arguments.

WOLFGANG ISCHINGER
Ambassador of Germany
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR:

Though Paul Johnson is a historian with a special interest in the tragedies of our age, he seems unaware of how closely the language with which he condemns anti-Semitism resembles the language of its foremost practitioners in Nazi Germany. Mr. Johnson asserts that anti-Semitism is "an intellectual disease, a disease of the mind, extremely infectious and massively destructive." Hitler called the Jews "vermin," spoke of "cleansing" the Reich of the "Jewish infection," and used an insecticide, cyanide gas, to rid Germany of its "plague."

Mr. Johnson states that "[i]t is not clear from the record exactly how, why, and when Hitler became a strident anti-Semite." Why is it important to know this? Why is it not enough to know that Hitler came to believe and do what he believed and did, like the rest of us, because that is what he chose to believe and do? Mr. Johnson's ostensible intention is to excoriate anti-Semitism by using the fashionable rhetoric of psychiatric dehumanization. But by doing so, he perhaps inadvertently excuses Nazi anti-Semitism.

We moderns do not believe in punishing diseases or patients for having diseases. We do not imprison, much less kill, mentally ill persons; we excuse them of their crimes and hospitalize them. John Hinckley is still being treated for his anti-Reaganism. If anti-Semitism is a disease, then the Nazi leaders were very sick indeed, and the Nuremberg trials were one of the great injustices of the 20th century.

Mr. Johnson says he has been trying to understand anti-Semitism. But to understand human behavior, we must be able to put ourselves in the shoes of the person whose behavior we want to understand. "Nothing human is alien to me," said the Roman philosopher and playwright Terence, in a declaration that became the credo of the Enlightenment. The credo of psychiatry, by contrast, is that "nothing alien is human to me."

THOMAS SZASZ, M.D.
Manlius, New York

TO THE EDITOR:

Paul Johnson bestrides the world of journalism and historiography like a colossus; to write a letter dissenting from his article fills me with a considerable amount of condign dread. But I must wonder whether "disease" is the right trope for discussing the phenomenon of anti-Semitism. I certainly agree with Mr. Johnson that disease and anti-Semitism both prove debilitating for their respective host bodies. But the danger in speaking too readily of a *moral* failure like anti-Semitism in terms of disease and pathology is that it ignores the question of *will*.

As Pope John Paul II said in his address to the people of Israel in 2000, "anti-Semitism is a sin." Not a disease, but a sin.

EDWARD T. OAKES, S.J.
University of St. Mary of the Lake
Mundelein, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR:

I am slightly amused and slightly appalled that Paul Johnson would claim and argue that Hitler's anti-Semitism was the entire motive, cause, and reason for the failure of Germany's aggression in World War II. Undoubtedly, Mr. Johnson knows of Hitler's vision of a greater Germania (a competing motive) and of the famous decision to open up a front against Russia (a competing cause of Germany's failure).

Moreover, in support of his argument, Mr. Johnson's list of Hitler's "good qualities" seems to outweigh his bad ones. Is he claiming that it was anti-Semitism that led to Hitler's psychotic behavior instead of claiming (as I believe) that it was Hitler's psychosis that fed his hatred and his maniacal actions? Was he a maniac or was he not?

A. RINDSBERG
San Diego, California

TO THE EDITOR:

The novelty of Paul Johnson's article seems to lie in its almost complete disregard for established views of anti-Semitism. Though most students of the subject maintain that fierce anti-Semitism, from Roman times to our own, tends to arise amid economic decline and social disarray, Mr. Johnson holds that these conditions are not the prerequisites of anti-Semitism but rather its inevitable, almost God-sent consequences. As he sees it, doom and poverty descend upon nations that persecute their Jewish citizens.

Some of Mr. Johnson's historical examples serve his case rather well, but most of them stretch history too far. To say, for instance, that England and particularly the U.S. won World War II because they embraced Jews persecuted elsewhere is a very shaky assertion (even putting aside the fact that both nations could have saved many more Jews). After all, another victorious country in the same war was Russia, where popular hatred of Jews and thinly veiled state anti-Semitism continue to this day.

MIKLÓS HERNÁDI
Budapest, Hungary

TO THE EDITOR:

Paul Johnson does his usual masterful job in "The Anti-Semitic Disease." He demonstrates how numerous countries and civilizations throughout history—Spain, France, czarist Russia, Germany—fell by the

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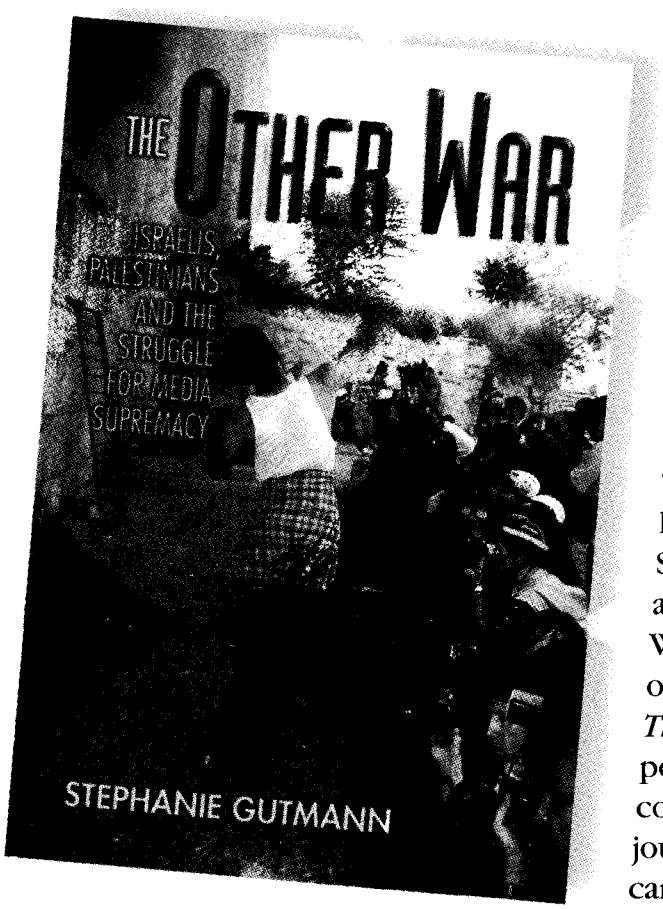
MIDEAST MEDIA CONFLICT



"An account so richly and meticulously documented that it will shock even readers already aware of the egregious bias against Israel in the mainstream media."

—Norman Podhoretz

To understand why Israel seemed to be losing the Mideast media war, journalist Stephanie Gutmann, who lived in Israel as a teenager, returned to Jerusalem and the West Bank during the second intifada to observe modern news-gathering up close. In *The Other War* she documents how regional political and military realities are defined by a constantly shifting cast of international journalists on the prowl for "good pictures" or career-making scoops, and often guided by a hardened anti-Israel ideology.

In the midst of suicide bombings and armed response, Gutmann watched as the region and its people—Israeli and Palestinian alike—became cardboard cutouts in dramas predetermined by ratings-obsessed and sometimes biased editors continents away.

Gutmann introduces us to key players in the daily battles for headline supremacy: the mercenary freelance photographers who hawk their bloodiest pictures to the highest bidder; the politically correct TV "parachuters" who drop in on the unfolding Mideast tragedy to get "face time" before flying off to the next international hotspot; the Palestinian Authority spinmeisters; the beleaguered Israeli press officers trying to present their side of a complex story.

Traveling into the disputed territories herself, Gutmann reconstructs the battle for Jenin, the death of the teenage martyr Mohammed al-Dura, and other events that became key battles in the other war. We learn from her absorbing insider's account that there is a reality in this region never touched by the international media corps, and that as in other wars, truth in this one is the first casualty.

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wayside once they allowed themselves to be infected by the self-destructive disease of anti-Semitism. And he points out that the current anti-Semitism of the Arabs has undoubtedly weakened their societies. Conversely, countries like the United States that have been welcoming to Jews have prospered.

All this is true, but Mr. Johnson neglects a significant point. It is not only that virulent anti-Semitism has deprived countries of a talented and motivated labor force, one that possesses great financial and organizational skills; nor is it just that the anti-Jewish obsession has sapped national energies and prevented countries from dealing with more important issues. Perhaps it is also the case that in hating Jews, people hate what Jews historically have stood for: God's presence in history. And hatred of God's ideals—justice, charity, love, discipline, ethics, sacrifice—inevitably leads to self-destruction, whether of individuals or of civilizations.

RABBI EMANUEL FELDMAN
Jerusalem, Israel

TO THE EDITOR:

As Paul Johnson perceptively notes, a critical element of the disease of anti-Semitism is that it causes damage not only to those who are the hated outsiders, but also to the carrier. Specifically, it causes the anti-Semite to lose the ability to see himself and his society and its faults.

Examples of this abound, including most notably in recent times in the Arab world, which slips further into medievalism while blaming the Jews for everything from the World Trade Center attack to the corruption of the Palestinians.

EDMUND GLASS
New York City

PAUL JOHNSON writes:

The German ambassador is mistaken in thinking I have reverted to Marxism. I have never been a Marxist—God forbid! I have always been a Roman Catholic. I reject determinism and always have rejected it.

I call anti-Semitism a disease for want of a better word. It is clearly not an ordinary form of racism. Whereas racist feelings are an almost inevitable part of uneducated human nature, anti-Semitism seems to me unnatural and perverse. It appears to me to have some of the characteristics of a mental disease, particularly in its destruction of the judgment.

But I was using disease merely as a metaphor, and metaphors should not be pushed too far. To call a habitual and violent anti-Semite a person suffering from a disease of the mind is not to absolve him from blame. My object in writing my article was to try to inject a new element into the subject of anti-Semitism, and to start a debate that may eventually prove fruitful. Let the debate continue.

"God's Perspective"

TO THE EDITOR:

Since my book *Why the Jews Rejected Jesus: The Turning Point in Western History* came out, it has been met by impassioned responses from every quarter, including the two major evangelical Christian magazines, *World* and *Christianity Today*. In each of those reviews there was no doubt where the reviewer himself stood. I wish I could say the same for COMMENTARY's critic.

Hillel Halkin's review essay, "Jews for Jesus—and Vice Versa" [June], describes some questions raised by my book. But Mr. Halkin decides not to offer his own views about the book's main topic: what Jews have believed about Jesus and the role of Christianity—its role, as I put it in a phrase Mr. Halkin finds unacceptable, from "God's perspective." In other words, how are Jews to understand the curious fact that there is another biblical religion hard at work trying to bring humanity closer to God, as we are supposed to be doing, as our own Torah instructs us? What does God mean to communicate to us by allowing this rival faith to flourish? In my book, I seek to answer these questions in the form of a two-thousand-year history of the Jewish-Christian debate about Jesus.

Mr. Halkin's response is merely skeptical: "Yet even if I were such [an Orthodox Jewish] reader, arguments formulated in terms of God's 'purpose' or 'perspective' would leave me, I suspect, uneasy." Why uneasy? Because "such speculations, whatever their heuristic value for religious debate, are ultimately of limited persuasiveness." So Mr. Halkin lets himself—and Jews as a whole—off the hook. Because some people may not be persuaded, none of us has to make the effort. Mr. Halkin also dismisses my book because he feels that neither conservative Christians nor Orthodox Jews nor secular Jews will, on the basis of my attempt to make sense of Christianity, be moved to join in a political alliance.

I had hoped that Mr. Halkin, a serious and thoughtful writer, would grant us a view of what he believes—about God, about Judaism, even about the role of the messiah. It is too easy to use politics or other practical concerns as an excuse not to do the thinking that God wants us Jews to do—the thinking that will bring us closer to Him. I assume that Mr. Halkin has done such thinking. Why does he not tell us what he has come up with?

One of the reasons I wrote my book is that I have often been struck by the complacency of modern Jewish culture. Whether religiously involved or not, Jews tend to be satisfied with the vaguest sorts of answers to the questions posed by religion, or with no answers at all. We bequeath this bland, content-free "Jewishness" to our children, who go out into the world and are confronted by religious cultures that actually mean something when they speak. Pity the bar-mitzvah boy who grows up and meets serious evangelical Christians who seek to introduce him to their faith. They have definite beliefs founded on a certain understanding of religious texts. In the encounter with their beliefs, our young Jew is intellectually disarmed, utterly defenseless. No wonder Jews wander off into foreign spiritual wildernesses in the numbers they do.

If my book makes just one young Jew contemplate the problem of what it means to anticipate the messianic future, I will con-

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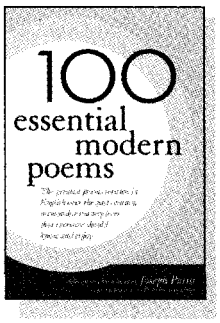
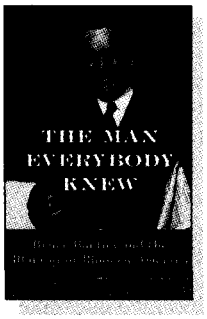
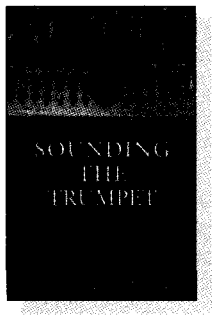
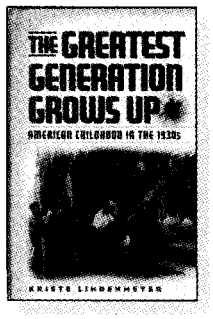
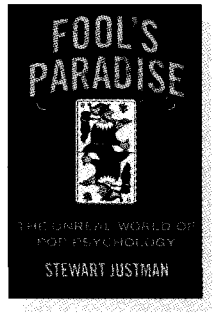
Get serious.











JOSEPH PARISI, EDITOR

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sider my efforts to have been worthwhile.

DAVID KLINGHOFFER
Mercer Island, Washington

HILLEL HALKIN writes:

David Klinghoffer challenges me to tell him and COMMENTARY's readers what I think is "God's perspective" on the relations between Judaism and Christianity. I wish I could oblige. I wish I knew what God's perspective was on anything. But I don't, and Klinghoffer (who, I will repeat for the record, has written a serious and articulate book) will just have to take me as I am.

Bush & Israel

TO THE EDITOR:

In a letter to the editor in your July-August issue, commenting on Norman Podhoretz's article, "Bush, Sharon, My Daughter, and Me" [April], Allan Leibler asserts: "At the end of March, the American ambassador to Israel, Daniel Kurtzer, stated emphatically that there was no understanding with the U.S. regarding Israel's retention of major Jewish population centers on the West Bank." In his response, Mr. Podhoretz refers to "the Kurtzer flap." Both Mr. Leibler's assertion and Mr. Podhoretz's offhanded response have no basis in fact.

The reality is that President Bush made a clear statement of U.S. policy in his April 14, 2004 letter to Prime Minister Sharon (an excerpt of which Mr. Podhoretz quotes accurately), and I, as the United States ambassador to Israel, have emphasized repeatedly and publicly that this letter reflects American policy. There is no misunderstanding between Israel and the United States in this regard. Unfortunately, a totally false article in an Israeli newspaper in late March 2005 got its facts wrong about statements attributed to me, apparently leading Messrs. Leibler and Podhoretz to draw erroneous conclusions. My own public statements on the day the false report was published, as well as statements for the record by senior U.S. officials in Washington, clearly underscore the continued applicability of the understandings conveyed by President Bush to Prime Minister Sharon.

DANIEL C. KURTZER
United States Ambassador to Israel
Tel Aviv, Israel

NORMAN PODHORETZ writes:

The "flap" to which I referred did indeed take place, and it did indeed concern Ambassador Kurtzer's reported denial that the United States had agreed to Israel's retention of the major Jewish population centers on the West Bank. Furthermore, Allan Leibler was—to put it mildly—far from the only Israeli who remained unconvinced by Mr. Kurtzer's insistence at the time that he had never made the statement attributed to him by an Israeli newspaper.

In my own response, I neither endorsed nor rejected Mr. Leibler's interpretation of Mr. Kurtzer's disavowal as "damage control." I must confess, however, that Mr. Kurtzer is not altogether wrong in suspecting me of having leaned toward Mr. Leibler's skepticism. Even so, I strongly disagreed with Mr. Leibler's idea that the Bush administration was using its ambassador to distance itself from the plain sense of the letter President Bush wrote to Prime Minister Sharon on April 14, 2004. (Here, yet again, is the crucial passage: "In light of new realities on the ground, including already existing major Israeli population centers, it is unrealistic to expect that the outcome of final-status negotiations will be a full and complete return to the armistice lines of 1949 [i.e., the '67 borders].")

Unlike Mr. Leibler, I thought it more likely that if Mr. Kurtzer had in fact denied that these words meant what they certainly seemed to mean, he was acting not as a spokesman for the President's policy but as an opponent. But if so, how could a sitting ambassador have dared to come out openly against the President he was supposed to be representing?

My guess was that the answer—if the case were truly such as to require one—might lie in Mr. Kurtzer's continuing thralldom to the old policy (according to which it is axiomatic that law and justice and peace require a withdrawal by Israel to the '67 borders and the removal of all Jewish settlements from the West Bank). If this too were so, he might simply have been unable to believe that President Bush had actually committed the United States to what could easily have struck anyone like himself—anyone, that is, who had cut his diplomatic teeth on the old axioms—as the political equivalent of declaring that parallel lines will eventually meet.

And now? Well, persuaded as I am that (1) President Bush most definitely did repudiate the old policy in his April 14 letter; (2) that he intends to stick by the assurance contained in that historic document; and (3) that Prime Minister Sharon is therefore right in claiming American backing for the inclusion within Israel's future borders of "the already existing major Jewish population centers" in Judea and Samaria—persuaded of all this, I am more than happy to drop my initial suspicions and to take Mr. Kurtzer at his word when he writes above that he never questioned "the continued applicability of the understandings conveyed in April 2004 by President Bush to Prime Minister Sharon."

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Peace in the Holy Land

Does Israel's "intransigence" stand in its way?

Many hope and believe that at long last peace in the Holy Land may be at hand. And that if it were not for Israel's intransigence, for its unwillingness to make "concessions," peace could have been attained long ago.

What are the facts?

Endlessly repeated myths. The myth that Israel's "occupation of Arab lands" is the root cause of the conflict is just that – a myth! Arabs have been slaughtering Jews long before the "occupation," long before the creation of the State of Israel in 1948. In 1929, for instance, Arabs killed 133 Jews and wounded 399 in Hebron. Those who were not killed fled, making the city, where Jews had lived for centuries, judenrein. The Mufti of Jerusalem met in 1941 with Adolf Hitler and declared his kinship with Nazi Germany because "we have the same enemy as Germany, namely the Jews."

> "Arabs...are the cause for this unending war. Unless and until that mindset changes, things will not improve."

Palestine, which incorporated what is now the Kingdom of Jordan, had been part of the Ottoman (Turkish) Empire for centuries. After World War I, Britain was given the Mandate over Palestine, which, in accordance with the Balfour Declaration, was to be the homeland for the Jewish people. This was formalized by the League of Nations and by the 52 nations that comprised it. In 1922, in violation of its Mandate, the British severed all the lands east of the Jordan River – 80 per cent of the Mandate – and gave it to the Arabs who, under the Hashemite rulers, created the Kingdom of Jordan. The Jews acquiesced to this betrayal. Britain finally relinquished its Mandate in 1947 and turned its responsibility over to the United Nations. They came up with a partition plan, by which the Arab sector was to be a contiguous land mass and the Jewish sector three discontiguous pieces. Jerusalem, located in the very center of the Arab sector, was to be "internationalized." Most of the Jewish sector was the desolate Negev desert. The Jews accepted this plan. But the Arabs rejected it out of hand and invaded the nascent Jewish state with the armies of six nations. It cost thousands of lives and caused over 650,000 Arabs to flee. Had the Arabs compromised, they would now have had their state since 1948.

Unending Arab aggression. In the Six-Day War of 1967, Israel again defeated the combined Arab might and remained in possession and administration of the Golan Heights, of Gaza, of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank"), of the Gaza Strip and of the entire city of Jerusalem. Israel had no intention of staying in possession of these territories. It waited for the Arabs to make proposals for peace, but that was not forthcoming. On the contrary, the Arab League met at Khartoum and promulgated their "three no's": no peace with Israel, no negotiation with Israel, and no recognition of Israel.

On Yom Kippur of 1973, Egypt and Syria once again attacked Israel. And again, the heroic people of Israel defeated the combined Arab armies and drove across the Suez Canal and to within miles of Cairo. In the aftermath of that war, Egypt's president Anwar Sadat came to Jerusalem and spoke to the Knesset, Israel's parliament. He offered a peace treaty, but imposed very tough conditions, among others, the return of the entire Sinai, with the cities that Israel had built; the return of the oil fields that Israel had developed (and which would have made it energy-independent for the foreseeable future); and relinquishing the strategic mountain passes and early warning systems that protected Israel against any future attack. It was the first time in recorded history that the vanquished imposed conditions on the victor. In what was obviously a major act of folly, and once again in its incessant quest for peace, Israel agreed to recognize the murderous PLO, invited it back into Palestine from its exile in Tunis and signed the Oslo Accord, by which governmental authority was to be bestowed on the Palestinians. But instead of accepting the outstretched hand of peace, the Palestinians launched their "intifadas," which have cost thousands of lives and which have left the Palestinians impoverished and with their economy in shambles.

The above is a mere outline of the "peace process." In 2000, under the stewardship of President Clinton, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak made unprecedented concessions for the sake of peace: 98 per cent of the land that the Palestinians requested, control over most areas of eastern Jerusalem, and authority over the Temple Mount. To the dismay of Clinton, Arafat curtly rejected this dramatic offer, under the pretext that Israel would not accept the "return of the refugees." That would have spelled the end of Israel as a Jewish state.

Israel's "intransigence?" No way! At every turn in this almost 100-year strife, Israel has offered compromises and concessions. The current folly, withdrawing from Gaza, is the latest example of that. Arabs, whose almost exclusive concern is the destruction of Israel, are the cause for this ongoing bloodletting and this unending war. Unless and until that mindset changes, things will not improve. But such a change of mindset does not appear on the horizon.

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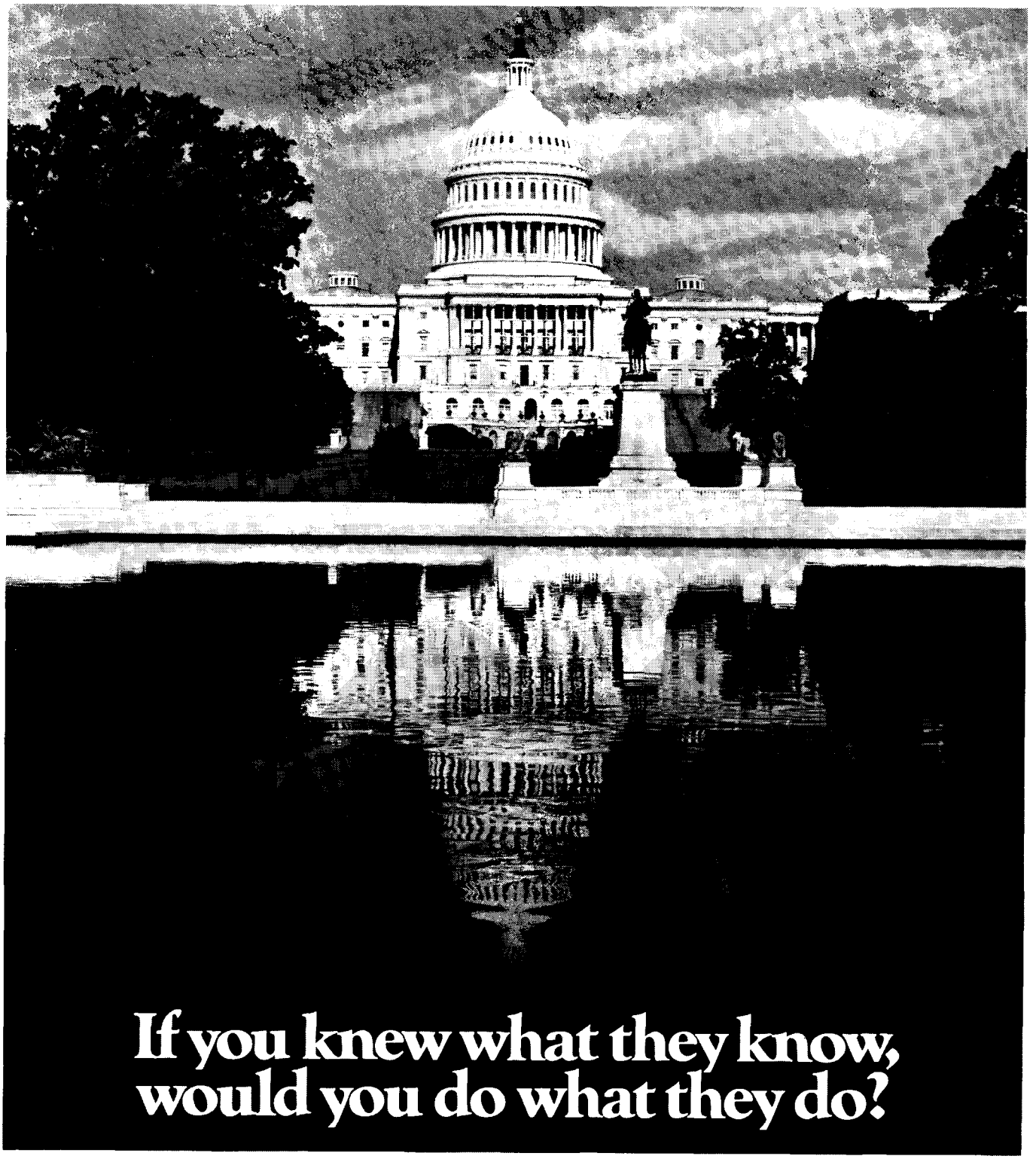

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Commentary
October 2005

Israel After Disengagement

Hillel Halkin

IT WAS necessary, it would seem, for the disengagement from Gaza to take place for the strategy behind it to be revealed as unworkable.

That strategy was based on two assumptions that have guided the Likud government of Ariel Sharon, both clearly held by him yet only partially articulated for reasons of political expediency. The first is that Palestinian and Israeli positions are too far apart, and the Palestinian leadership too weak and untrustworthy, for successful negotiations between the two sides to take place in the foreseeable future. The second is that, in the absence of a negotiated agreement, Israel cannot afford, either politically or demographically, to remain forever in the greater part of the territories now controlled by it.

Sharon's operative conclusion from these assumptions was that Israel would have to act unilaterally, withdrawing its army and settlements from most of the territories to borders determined by itself, with no formal quid pro quo from either the Palestinians or the international community. On the one hand, this would relieve it of the moral and physical burden of millions of Palestinians who, even if technically under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority, were unable to live their lives freely with Israeli settlements and military forces on every side of them. On the other hand, it would enable Israel to retain, behind physical barriers now under construction, many of the Jewish settlements established beyond the 1967 ceasefire lines, including all the major "settlement blocs." Such a course of action, it was deemed, would also greatly reduce Palestinian terror, while the new borders, even if not winning international recognition, might gain tacit acceptance from the United States and other countries.

The disengagement from Gaza in August was the first stage in the implementation of this plan. The next stage, even if Sharon and his advisers refused to speak about it openly, was obviously meant to involve a much larger evacuation of settlements from the West Bank, the mountainous region north and south of Jerusalem that was held by Jordan until the 1967 war.

Gaza, then, was a test case. The preliminary results of the test are now in, and they are negative. They show that what was possible with 8,000 settlers in the Gaza Strip will not be possible with the estimated 60,000 settlers who, out of some 250,000 currently living in the West Bank, will end up on the other side of the security fence once it is completed.

This is not a cause for rejoicing. On the contrary, it leaves one deeply perturbed. As readers of COMMENTARY know, I supported the disengagement from Gaza because I thought its logic was

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correct. I did not believe the Palestinian-Israeli peace negotiations that broke down for the last time in early 2001 could be renewed with any hope of success, and I agreed that the greatest dangers facing Israel in the years to come were neither Palestinian terror nor Arab military might but international de-legitimization and the erosion and ultimate disappearance of the country's Jewish majority. Unilateral withdrawal seemed the best—indeed the only practical—way of dealing with these problems. I take no pleasure in having changed my mind.

THE DISENGAGEMENT from Gaza has been widely praised, both in Israel and around the world, as a resounding success. Why, then, do I perversely insist on viewing it as a failure?

In itself, indeed, it was no failure. Despite its many difficult moments, the evacuation of the Gaza Strip settlements went as well as anyone had hoped it might and far better than many people had feared. There was little violence, no serious injuries, and such sparse physical resistance on the part of the settlers and their supporters that the army, which had originally budgeted nearly a month for removing them, finished the job in a week. Dire predictions of civil anarchy and widespread military insubordination proved false. The country held together and weathered the storm handily.

The failure rather consisted in not having understood that even a "successful" disengagement from Gaza would be inconceivable elsewhere if multiplied by a factor of seven or eight.

One might dwell on a few simple statistics. An estimated 42,000 policemen and soldiers took part in the evacuation of the 8,000 Gaza settlers, with another 13,000 held in reserve—that is, at least a third of Israel's police force and the equivalent of four or five army divisions. If proportionally the same number of men in uniform had to evacuate 60,000 equally uncooperative settlers from the West Bank, close to 400,000 of them would be needed. This would require Israel to mobilize all of its military reserves and to assign every policeman and soldier at its disposal to the task.

What would be the cost of evacuating 60,000 settlers? The total expense of the disengagement from Gaza, from paying compensation to the evacuees to chartering the buses that took them away, may approach $2 billion. Taking a conservative figure of $1.5 billion and multiplying it by seven, we arrive at $10.5 billion—one-sixth of Israel's national budget. Such an expenditure, even if spread, say, over a period of three years, would increase the government's annual deficit from a tolerable 3 percent to a hyper-inflationary 10 percent.

And where would 60,000 West Bank settlers be put, pending the construction of new homes for them? Two thousand hotel rooms had to be rented on a long-term basis to house Gaza evacuees with nowhere to stay. A sevenfold number of 14,000 rooms would amount to a third of Israel's total hotel capacity.

Needless to say, these are crude projections. Yet they do give an idea of what a Gaza-style disengagement from the West Bank might entail. Moreover, they would have to be continually revised upward, since the Jewish population of the West Bank is currently increasing at a rapid rate.

In addition, and this is crucial, a West Bank disengagement would be far more confrontational than was the case in Gaza. The Gaza settlers were, for the most part, ideological moderates living in a remote area of little strategic or Jewish historical importance that could be physically sealed off without difficulty—in spite of which, thousands of diehard protesters managed to join them and to cause most of the trouble once the evacuation began. The West Bank, the biblical heartland of Judea and Samaria that geographically dominates Israel's central coastal plain, is a short drive from Jerusalem and not much farther from Tel Aviv. Many of the settlements that stand to be evacuated there have ideologically hardcore populations that could not be prevented from being massively reinforced from outside. Nor would the leaders of the settler movement, who acted as a force for restraint in Gaza, be that again. This time, faced with what would be for them a catastrophe of far greater magnitude, they would pull out all the stops. In such a situation, the chaos that failed to materialize in August could very well come to pass.

"BUT ALL this," I will be told, "is based on a misguided premise. You are supposing that a West Bank disengagement would have to be carried out in one fell swoop, as in Gaza. If, however, it were to take place gradually, each phase involving a smaller number of settlers, it might be perfectly manageable."

Logistically, this might be so. Psychologically and politically, though, it would not be. This brings us to the next point.

In the past months, Israel has undergone a severe trauma. One aspect of it, the shock of the disengagement to the settler movement and its principal source of support, the country's half-million

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strong modern-Orthodox or "national religious" community, was on public display well in advance of August. Although this community's painful reckoning with its punctured illusions has only just begun, it has come as a surprise to no one.

Less predictable were the reactions in other quarters. Sitting in front of their televisions, which provided non-stop, around-the-clock coverage of the evacuation until the last settler had boarded the last bus, many pro-disengagement Israelis had strong visceral responses. Twenty percent, according to the polls, found themselves more anti-settler than before. But 30 percent moved in the other direction.

Some among this latter group, it can be assumed, were experiencing no more than ordinary human sympathy. Even if you are convinced of its necessity, it is hard to watch people being evicted from their homes without feeling for them. But for other Israelis, it was more than that. As they watched the settlers marching to the waiting buses with their children and Torah scrolls in their arms, they had a deeply disturbing sense of déjà vu. Although they were aware that what they were viewing was in part a media event, staged for their benefit, they could not help associating it with other scenes from Jewish history.

To be sure, the evacuation of the Gaza settlers was no medieval expulsion. If many of them had been turned into temporarily homeless refugees by a Jewish government, that was principally because they themselves had refused until the last moment to negotiate the terms of their relocation. Still, the fact remained that they were being forced from their homes because they were Jews whom a non-Jewish population, justifiably or not, refused to tolerate in its midst. Otherwise, why could not those who wished to remain have done so under Palestinian rule?

Nor was that all. As the TV images shifted from houses being emptied to houses being demolished, the bulldozers and backhoes pulverizing in minutes what had taken long years to build, there were viewers who felt a shiver of concern for their own future.

Zionism, after all, was always a movement of construction. It was indeed the only great revolutionary movement of modern times that did not set out deliberately to destroy anything—not a foreign occupation, not an *ancien régime*, not an oppressive ruling class. It wanted only to build a home for the Jewish people, and from the outset it built wherever it could. "We will clothe you in cement and concrete,/We will spread a rug of gardens at your feet": many Israelis still know by heart lines like these, addressed to the land of Israel by the poet Natan Alterman, that were once sung as anthems of Zionist pioneering.

One cannot understand the post-1967 settlement movement in the occupied territories without realizing that, long before it became an Israeli policy, it was an Israeli instinct. From the arrival of the first Zionist pioneers in Palestine in 1882, Zionism had one grand obsession: to find available land and put Jews on it. That this land might be arid, or swampy, or surrounded by hostile Arab villages was no deterrent. Zionism took what it could get, often paying absurdly high prices for it, and did what Jewish determination could do with it. Israel arose in 1948 along the lines that it did only because this determination was great.

It was this same instinct that caused the Labor government of Golda Meir to found Gush Katif, the main Jewish settlement bloc in the Gaza Strip, on uninhabited sand dunes in the region's southwest corner in the early 1970's. There was nothing particularly rational or equitable about this. The Gaza Strip was already then an impoverished area, crowded with Palestinian refugees, that needed whatever land reserves it had. A Jewish enclave at one far end of it, separated from Israel proper by the Palestinian city of Rafah, was pointless. It came into existence not, as was once said of the British Empire, in a fit of absent-mindedness, but in a fit of habitual creation.

Nevertheless, it is one thing to say that the Gaza settlements should never have been built and quite another to raze them to the ground. (How much better it might have been had they not been razed, and had some of the Palestinians living in Gaza's hovels been given the benefit of them. But both sides, for reasons of their own, were bent on their demolition.) When a great historical movement begins to destroy what it has built, a frisson may seize the observer. Watching this happen was like watching a river turn around and run backward. It felt instinctively wrong. It caused the political commentator Ari Shavit, comparing the televised evacuation to a movie, to write in the pages of the Hebrew daily *Ha'aretz*:

> What was this movie about? About reversibility. From a bulldozer you came and to a bulldozer you shall return. . . . What made the disengagement a formative Israeli movie was the fact that even at its conclusion, the type of reversibility it describes remains unclear. Was it that of Gush Katif, of Judea and Samaria, or of all of Israel?

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HOW MANY Israelis agreed that the events of August were emotionally searing? A very large number. In a post-evacuation survey published by Camille Fuchs of Tel Aviv University, 61 percent chose the phrase "hurting and pained" as best describing their country in disengagement's aftermath.

How many changed their minds about supporting a second-stage disengagement in the West Bank? Perhaps more than 10 percent. A survey conducted in late August by the veteran pollster Mina Zemach reported 54 percent prepared to evacuate more settlements in Judea and Samaria—down from 63 percent in July. Another, later poll by Fuchs showed 48 percent in favor and 42 percent opposed.

Of course, these are still majorities. Yet they are precarious ones. Although no one knows what will have become of these figures a year or two from now, it would be difficult to conceive of any Israeli government undertaking a major evacuation of West Bank settlements with so slim a margin of public support.

Indeed, if Israeli politicians have learned anything from the bitter experience of the 1993 Oslo agreement, it is not to make fateful decisions for an almost evenly split country. Ariel Sharon was able to evacuate Gaza without shattering Israel too deeply because he went into it with two-thirds of the country behind him—enough to convince anti-disengagement Israelis that the popular will was against them. Had he done so with the support of only a skimpy majority, the repercussions would have been far greater.

To this must be added a political corollary: a clear national consensus in favor of the surrender of territory can be forged in Israel only when the mainstream Right, or a large part of it, joins the Left in backing it. This happened in 1979-82, when Menachem Begin kept most of his Likud party in line while negotiating and implementing a withdrawal from Sinai, and it is what happened again now, too, despite a far more serious rebellion in Likud's ranks. But any attempt to evacuate areas of the West Bank without significant support in Likud is a sure prescription for a disastrously ruptured society such as Israel was between the signing of the Oslo agreement and the 1995 assassination of Yitzhak Rabin.

Yet the chances of mobilizing even a part of Likud on behalf of a Gaza-style disengagement in the West Bank are, in the coming years, nil. The party is still smarting from Sharon's rebuff of it when, in May 2004, he ignored its anti-disengagement vote in an internal referendum, and there is a strong likelihood that before the next national elections are held—an event that may come as early as the winter or spring of 2006—it will have replaced him as its leader with Benjamin Netanyahu. Having come out strongly against the withdrawal from Gaza at the last moment while resigning from Sharon's cabinet, Netanyahu is not about to endorse a magnified West Bank version of it. And even if Sharon were to retain control of the Likud and win reelection at the head of it, he would certainly not provoke it into a second insurrection more furious than the first.

That is why it is senseless to think that a unilateral evacuation of most of the West Bank could be made more manageable by breaking it down into phases. Just suppose that Israel had to go through not one more trauma but seven or eight, each considerably worse than last August's and each preceded by long months of savage political warfare. Perhaps the many commentators and the many spokesmen of governments and international organizations who have lauded the disengagement from Gaza as a first step toward more of the same can picture this. I cannot.

CONTRARY TO the common perception, then, the settlers did not lose in Gaza. Rather, they won by demonstrating that a repeat performance is out of the question. This was indeed their leadership's central goal from the moment it realized that it lacked the votes in the Knesset to block disengagement's first stage. From then on, the real battle was over Judea and Samaria.

This is a battle that began in 1967. From the outset, the settler movement strove to populate the West Bank with enough Jews to make their removal from it impossible. For many years, it seemingly stood no chance of success. Even at the time of the Oslo agreement in the early 1990's, there were barely 100,000 Jewish residents in Judea and Samaria. The astonishing increase that has taken place since then under the most inauspicious circumstances—Israel's handing over of much of the West Bank to the PLO, twelve subsequent years of Palestinian terror, the growing condemnation of the international community—is above all a tribute to the tenacity and resolve of the settlers themselves.

But it would not appear to be a tribute to their ultimate foresight. For where does Israel go from here? In the eyes of nearly all the world, it is still, after the disengagement from Gaza, an illegitimately occupying power in the West Bank. It is also still burdened with millions of Palestinians

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whose rate of increase far outstrips that of Israeli Jews. True, without the Gaza Strip, the ratio of Jews to Arabs west of the Jordan River has risen from approximately 53-47 to 61-39. But the Palestinian Arab birthrate, which is higher than that of Israel's own Arab citizens, is capable of eliminating that gap—and with it the existence of Israel as a Jewish state—in a generation.

In thinking about where Israel now goes, one might begin with where it cannot and should not go. First on the list is a capitulation to Palestinian demands for a near-total withdrawal to the 1967 ceasefire lines, plus a real or symbolic "right of return" for the Palestinian refugees, in exchange for a formal peace treaty—the Palestinian position when negotiations broke off in 2001. Given the history of PLO and Palestinian Authority mendacity, and the unlikelihood that a state on 22 percent of historical British-mandate Palestine could satisfy minimal Palestinian aspirations, it would be the height of folly for Israel to surrender all of its 1967 gains, with their military and strategic advantages, in return for a piece of paper worth no more than the 1993 Oslo Declaration of Principles. Such a "peace" might last five years or ten; it would almost certainly break down in the end, overridden by Palestine irredentism and the still simmering refugee issue. Meanwhile, the price Israel would have to pay for it would be the evacuation, not of 60,000 West Bank settlers, but of 150,000 or even more—that is, of the Gaza disengagement multiplied by at least twenty.

Additional "mini-disengagements" should also be ruled out. In the absence of productive peace negotiations, there is every reason to expect continued international pressure on Israel to carry out further unilateral withdrawals in order to "keep the peace process going." One temptation might be for an Israeli government to try relieving such pressure by minor pullbacks similar to the one executed from four small settlements in the northern West Bank in tandem with the evacuation of the Gaza Strip. The idea has also been floated of coordinating such pullbacks with the establishment of a "provisional" Palestine state with undefined borders that would expand in the future. Yet even if politically feasible, this would be inadvisable for Israel. It would do nothing but buy time while inviting pressure for more retreats whose limits would not be set in advance.

And time is not in Israel's favor. This is so not just demographically. In recent years, the propaganda push to depict Israel as an apartheid state in which ruling Jews victimize helpless Palestinians has been gaining frightening momentum. Apart from the United States, there is scarcely a Western country in which, despite years of Palestinian terror, anti-Israel sentiment in the media and intellectual life is not dominant and getting stronger.

This is especially the case in Europe, whose large and feared Muslim populations have also helped tip the balance of public opinion against the Jewish state. But even in America, Israel's image has steadily eroded, as evidenced by the recent disinvestment campaigns of large liberal church groups. Although fortunately there is still a long way to go, it is no longer unimaginable that Israel may one day come to be so widely regarded as a latter-day South Africa that public pressure will encourage Western governments, in any case anxious to cozy up to Arab and Muslim nations, to treat it as one.

From the South African analogy, moreover, has flowed an idea that is increasingly voiced even though it is the most absurd of all. If a resemblance to apartheid South Africa is the problem, this line of reasoning goes, then let a resemblance to post-apartheid South Africa be the solution. Turn Israel/Palestine into a single, one-man, one-vote country, and let justice and harmony reign.

How much justice and harmony now reign in South Africa is a debatable question. What is not debatable, however, is that there is no meaningful parallel between apartheid South Africa and present-day Israel/Palestine. On the eve of apartheid's dismantling, South African blacks outnumbered whites by five-to-one; it was thus a foregone conclusion on both sides that, in agreeing to a single, democratically run state, whites were ceding political control to blacks with no chance of regaining it or of ever again being a dominant force in their country. Their only hope was to continue living there as a legally protected minority with enough economic power to defend their interests. On their ability to retain this power, and the black majority's willingness to let them do so, rests their still far from certain future.

By contrast, a one-man, one-vote Israel/Palestine would be a country in which two more or less numerically equal populations, divided not only by culture, language, religion, history, transnational allegiances, economic and social interests, and territorial disputes, but by a hundred years of bitter enmity, would be required to administer between them a single polity, its institutions, and its military. Can any rational person suppose for a moment that such a country would not soon fly apart at the seams, with far worse bloodshed than it has

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known in the past? One has to be either naïvely utopian or unscrupulously Machiavellian to promote such a scheme. Yet the longer the status quo continues, the more backing it will win, rendering all the more intolerable a military presence, originally conceived of as temporary, that, almost four decades after the 1967 war, has become ruinous for everyone.

STILL BORDERING on the seemingly utopian is a solution that, although it has been proposed by different people in different places (including by me in the pages of COMMENTARY*), has never gained wide currency. Although it has a great deal of poetic justice on its side, it is doubtful whether it has as much reality.

This solution would be for Israel to offer the Palestinians a confederation of two independent, side-by-side states bound to each other by mutual commitments, among them the agreement of each to allow the other's citizens—perhaps up to an agreed-on population cap—to reside within its borders. These borders, open to the free passage of people and goods in both directions, would run along the 1967 Israel-Jordan ceasefire lines. Jewish settlers could remain in a demilitarized state of Palestine as Israeli citizens; Palestinian citizens could have a similar status in Israel. Israeli troops would be withdrawn from all of the Palestinian state except for the sparsely populated Jordan Valley, where they would be allowed to retain permanent bases.

Such a confederation, which would preserve Israel/Palestine as a single geographical unit while dividing it into two closely linked sovereignties, would have genuine advantages for both sides—as well as offering some bitter pills to swallow and some even greater dangers.

For the Palestinians, it would mean getting the state and the borders they have been insisting on, with the added bonus that the remaining 78 percent of British-mandate Palestine, though under Israeli rule, would be open to them to visit, work in, and live in. Besides giving them all the benefits of participation in the Israeli economy, this would go a long way toward satisfying their demand for the "right of return" of the 1948 refugees. In exchange, however, they would have to accept the permanent presence of settlers and of the Israeli army on land from which they have sworn to eject both.

For Israel, a confederative solution would permit the settlers, or those so choosing, to remain where they are and maintain the Jewish people's historic connection with Judea and Samaria while giving the West Bank's Arabs their freedom. It would also, by retaining the Jordan River as Israel's defense line, provide a high degree of security against any future military threat from the east.

On the other hand, such an arrangement's open borders would provide very little security from Palestinian terror, whose elimination would have to depend on a general state of Palestinian contentment and a strong Palestinian government with the will to suppress violence. Moreover, Israel would be required to surrender sovereignty not only over the "settlement blocs" but over much of Jerusalem, while running the risk of a large influx of poor Palestinians drawn by economic opportunities. Although such migrants would not be eligible for Israeli citizenship, they could, added to the more than 1 million Israeli Arabs holding such citizenship today, create severe tensions and aggravate nationalist animosities. And who is to say that the Jewish settlers in the state of Palestine might not also end up in bitter disputes with their Arab neighbors, who might be compelled to put up with them but not to like them? Could the Jews count on a Palestinian government to protect them?

In short, the success of a confederative solution would depend on the prior existence of the same good will that it is its goal to achieve, thereby repeating the mistake of Oslo all over again. One lesson of the "peace process" was that such circularity does not work in politics any more than in logic. In situations of conflict, open-ended agreements that do not clearly terminate all major sources of friction tend to exacerbate more than to conciliate. A Palestinian-Israeli confederation, while perhaps not as clearly suicidal as a bi-national state, would nevertheless be asking for trouble. And of trouble, Israel has had quite enough.

IS THE impasse, then, total? Not necessarily. But the way out of it depends as much on the United States as it does on Israel.

Thus far, the Bush administration's position on disengagement, the West Bank security fence, and Israel's ultimate borders has been consistently ambiguous. U.S. officials, including President Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, have spoken repeatedly of the need for further West Bank withdrawals without specifying what areas these should include. They have defended Israel's right to build the fence while also referring to it as "a problem" whose existence should be "temporary," a mere "security barrier" rather than a "political barrier." And although the President has said explicitly

* "Why the Settlements Should Stay," June 2002.

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that Israel cannot be expected to withdraw to its pre-June 1967 frontier with Jordan, he has declined to state unequivocally that all the major West Bank settlement blocs must remain within Israel.

Thus, in a much-cited letter to Prime Minister Sharon last April, soon after the latter's visit to the Bush ranch in Texas, the President wrote:

> As part of a final peace settlement, Israel must have secure and recognized borders, which should emerge from negotiations between the parties in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 and 338. In light of new realities on the ground, including already existing major Israeli population centers, it is unrealistic to expect that the outcome of final-status negotiations will be a full and complete return to the armistice lines of 1949 [which lasted until June 1967], and all previous efforts to negotiate a two-state solution have reached the same conclusion.

The trouble is that, in every one of the "previous efforts to negotiate," the Palestine Authority has categorically refused to agree that all these "existing population centers," which occupy some 10 to 15 percent of the West Bank, should be incorporated into Israel. At most, it has been willing to consider yielding some of them as part of a land swap giving it an equal amount of territory inside Israel—a demand that Israel, which came into possession of the West Bank after being attacked by Jordan in 1967, has quite rightly rejected. This was one of the main issues over which the 2001 talks broke down, and the Palestinian position has if anything hardened since then. For the United States to tell Israel that it should have borders reflecting "new realities on the ground" but also "emerging from negotiations" is thus to deliver a thoroughly contradictory message.

Nor will this contradiction be resolved by changes in Palestinian politics. Even if the much talked-about "democratization" of the Palestinian Authority takes place, the leadership elected will not soften its negotiating positions. On the contrary: the more "democratic" a Palestinian government is, the more uncompromising its leaders will most likely become, since popular sentiment has regularly been even more hardline than that of the Palestinian Authority's top echelons. The strong political influence of Hamas in a democratic Palestinian society would in itself ensure that negotiations with Israel could never get off the ground.

If there is any hope for the two peoples to disentangle themselves in the West Bank before it is tragically too late, therefore, it does not lie in sterile negotiations. It lies in America's resolving the contradiction. This alone would enable the second stage of disengagement to take place.

True, I have argued that a Gaza-style disengagement in the West Bank is impossible. But this style, let us remember, was unilateral. Whatever the balance of its risks and benefits, Israel has received, in return, no concessions, no commitments, and no guarantees from any another government. And indeed, in return for such nothing once again, the Herculean effort that a withdrawal from most of the West Bank would require *is* impossible. There is simply no way in which an Israeli government could marshal sufficient political support for it.

But this need not be the case if the withdrawal were in return for something. If that something were substantial enough, a clear national consensus in favor of a second-stage West Bank disengagement could in all likelihood be mobilized despite the turmoil caused by the first stage. The political struggle would still be titanic, and the evacuation itself, whether single- or multi-phased, of colossal difficulty. But it could be done; most Israelis would be willing to pay the price.

WHAT WOULD they be paying for? For a presidential declaration from Washington that said something like this:

> Although the government of the United States continues to believe that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would best be resolved through negotiations as called for in the Road Map, and has every hope that this will one day prove possible, there is no prospect of its happening at the present moment. In the meantime, since Israel is prepared to withdraw all of its settlers and armed forces from close to 90 percent of the West Bank to the security fence it has built, the United States will regard this withdrawal, once completed, as constituting full compliance with United Nations Security Council resolution 242, and will recognize the new line as Israel's border with the Palestinian Authority.

Such a declaration, of course, could not come out of the blue. It would have to be preceded by private negotiations between Israel and the United States over just where the still uncompleted parts of the security fence should run. But as long as Israel received all of its settlement blocs and had its interests guaranteed in Jerusalem, it could be expected to take American concerns into consideration.

Were the United States publicly behind such a

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move, Israelis, knowing that they would at last have a recognized eastern frontier along militarily tolerable, demographically viable, morally acceptable lines that are also relatively safe from terror would, I believe, vote decisively—although many with a heavy heart—for leaving the rest of Judea and Samaria.

Can the United States afford to make such a change in its policy? The Palestinians would initially react with fury; the Arab world would squawk; the Europeans would grumble about a perfidious sell-out to the "Jewish lobby"—but all this would pass. Some countries would come around and endorse the American declaration in principle. And once Israel's evacuation of the West Bank actually took place, one can imagine that the real reaction—in Europe, in the Arab countries and elsewhere around the world, and among the Palestinians themselves—would be of relief. Finally, the Israeli occupation would be over.

Such a step, moreover, *would* be in true compliance with Security Council resolution 242, over whose exact wording the United States led so hard a fight at the time. That resolution, adopted soon after the 1967 war, speaks of "the withdrawal of Israel's armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict," not of withdrawal from "the territories"; that is to say, the withdrawal it calls for is not total. At the end of the 1967 war, Israel held nearly 30,000 square miles of militarily occupied territory in the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights. After pulling back to the West Bank security fence, it will have evacuated 97 percent of this area. How much closer to both the spirit and the letter of 242 can it get?

It is true that the Palestinians may find it difficult to build a viable state in the tiny territory of Gaza plus nine-tenths of the West Bank. But they would have found it difficult to build a viable state in Gaza plus ten-tenths of the West Bank, too. In all likelihood, sooner or later, state or no state, they will do the obvious thing and join up once again with Jordan, between which and the West Bank there will no longer be a barrier once the Israeli withdrawal takes place. Jordan's land area is fifteen times the West Bank's; it is more than three times Israel's. But this is a matter that can be left to the Palestinians and the Jordanians.

As for Palestinian irredentism, it will continue to exist. Perhaps organizations like Hamas will occasionally lob rounds of rockets or mortar shells over the security fence, to which Israel will have to respond, just as it does to Hizballah attacks from Lebanon. Nor will an Israeli withdrawal to the fence put a total end to terrorism, either, although it should be able to contain it effectively. Much will depend on the degree of civil unity or strife within Palestinian society itself, and on how long this society takes to normalize and prosper economically. A long time will pass before a Palestinian or Palestinian-Jordanian government will recognize Israel's new frontier. All this, however, will be infinitely preferable to the present state of affairs—and to any of the other alternatives on offer.

For years, the United States has urged Israel to make bold and courageous decisions in order to help solve its conflict with the Palestinians. Here is a chance for America to make such a decision itself.

—September 7, 2005

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Mao Lives

Arthur Waldron

THE 20TH century was remarkable not only for the number and scale of the atrocities it witnessed but also for the slowness with which these frightful events were recognized for what they were, let alone condemned. Of these crimes, which began with the mass murders by Lenin and Stalin in the USSR (costing over 20 million lives) and continued through the Nazi Holocaust and the democides in China and Cambodia, only the Nazi horror is regularly acknowledged and truly well known. The others are still primarily the province of specialists.

This is particularly the case with the crimes of Mao Zedong, the founder in 1949 of the People's Republic of China and, until his death in 1976, its supreme ruler. China has never repudiated Mao as Khrushchev did Stalin at the party congress of 1956. Embalmed in Tiananmen Square, he remains today the final source of legitimacy for the government in Beijing. Nor, with honorable exceptions, have Western scholars ever dealt with Mao as at least some did with Lenin and Stalin. Today, no one in his right mind would put a portrait of Hitler in his house. Yet, in many places in the West, Mao kitsch—posters, badges, busts, and so forth—is still considered not only acceptable but even fashionable.

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One reason, perhaps, is that Mao Zedong was introduced to the world stage as a hero. He made his first appearance—as a genial and modest man who happened also to be a dedicated social revolutionary—in a long interview with the American journalist Edgar Snow. The interview, which took place at the Communist party's headquarters in a remote corner of northwest China, formed the core of Snow's book, *Red Star Over China*, which has been continuously in print ever since its first appearance in 1936.[1] Nearly all subsequent accounts descend, in one way or another, from his.

Mao was forty-two when he met Snow. As he told the American journalist, he had been born to a farming family in the south-central province of Hunan, spent a rebellious childhood and youth, attended a teachers' college, and helped to found the Chinese Communist party.

What Mao grasped, in this account, was that Communism could succeed in China only if it stood with the hundreds of millions of impoverished rural dwellers rather than (as the party's real leadership in Moscow had insisted) with the relative handful of China's industrial workers. So, from the start, Mao's Communism contained a strong admixture of indigenous elements. This remarkable and, as it seemed, durable blending of traditional elements with modernity (in its Communist

[1] In Chinese translation, under the anodyne title *Record of a Journey to the West*, the book also made Mao a hero to many of his countrymen who had hitherto been ignorant even of his existence.

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form) held a powerful appeal for many Chinese whose sense of identity had been shattered by the ending of the old order when the last dynasty abdicated in 1912.

Naturally, Mao's liberationist intentions also alarmed the class of rural landlords and "gentry" who supported the then-central government of Chiang Kai-shek at Nanjing. Chiang and his allies mounted five "extermination campaigns" against the base areas of the Communists. The fifth, planned with German assistance, would have finished them (so the standard story goes) had not Mao led a brilliant break-out, the celebrated "Long March," that moved through the most remote areas a step ahead of the pursuing Nationalists, fighting valiantly when attacked and eventually escaping to the security of the northwest, where Snow recorded Mao's stirring account.

THEN CAME World War II, when—according to the received version—the Communists were the only Chinese really willing to fight the Japanese. (Chiang Kai-shek himself was supposedly much more interested in fighting Mao.) It was then that Mao led a great revolutionary upsurge that, translated into a mighty military force, helped not only to drive the Japanese back but to sweep him and his followers to power in the ensuing civil war of 1945-49. Snow later told this story, too, though its most eloquent and influential version came from the pen of the late Barbara Tuchman.

In *Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911-1945* (1971) and other writings, Tuchman argued that, in supporting Chiang's Nationalists, the United States had backed the wrong horse in China. This is the so-called "Lost Chance in China" school, whose adherents believe to this day that a different U.S. policy would not only have spared us future conflicts with China over Korea, Vietnam, and the Taiwan Strait but would have changed Mao himself. Aligned with the U.S. (as he wished) instead of with the USSR (as we forced him to become), he would have ruled China in a far more democratic and pro-Western fashion.

Even aligned with the USSR, however, Mao in power continued to be viewed favorably by most Western scholars and commentators. To be sure, confiscating and redistributing land from the rich to the poor involved bloodshed, as did the cleaning-up of such notoriously lawless cities as Shanghai. Mao also attacked the educated, even some who had supported him, as in the Hundred Flowers campaign of the mid-1950's when criticism of the regime was invited but then crushed as soon as it crossed certain boundaries. Later, in the Great Leap Forward (1959-61), he attempted to substitute China's abundant manpower for its limited capital in order to make possible a rapid growth of the economy, unfortunately causing widespread death by starvation in the process. Toward the end of his life, worried by the near-extinction of the revolutionary flame in the Soviet Union, he launched the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1965-76) in which marginalized groups, above all students and young people, were encouraged to run riot against entrenched authority.

These blemishes were duly noted, though never the scale of death and destruction they entailed. Always, Mao was seen as searching for new ways to build socialism, and on these grounds much if not everything could be forgiven him.[2] In 1955, Simone de Beauvoir judged that "the power [Mao] exercises is no more dictatorial than, say, Roosevelt's was"; in 1972, Jean-Paul Sartre hailed his "revolutionary violence."

In the academic world, Mao's achievements were extolled while the alternatives offered by the rival Nationalists, or by parties calling for parliamentary democracy, or by refugee critics were dismissed as hopeless dead ends. Scholars who dissented often paid with their careers. Certainly, it was concluded, Mao had shed blood as he "reformed" the system, and he had often shown a hard, authoritarian hand. But given the results, who could cavil? As the influential Harvard professor John K. Fairbank observed in 1972 on returning from a visit, "The Maoist revolution is on the whole the best thing that has happened to the Chinese people in centuries."

Something like this view is still very widespread, among both specialists and the broader public. No American textbook of Chinese history classes Mao with Stalin, or with Hitler. Nor has any foreign leader since the 1960's ever spoken out against the evils of Chinese Communism with anything like

[2] To be sure, some did get the story right, and from as early as the 1950's. They included, among others, the Hungarian Jesuit Ladislao La Dany, publisher of the authoritative Hong Kong weekly *China News Analysis*; Raymond J. de Jaegher, author of *The Enemy Within: An Eyewitness Account of the Communist Conquest of China* (1952); the German political scientist Juergen Domes, who was able to arrive at a figure of 10 million victims of Mao's 1959-61 famine in *Internal Politics of China, 1949-72* (1973); Edward Rice, former American consul general in Hong Kong and author of *Mao's Way* (1971); Ivan and Miriam London and their collaborator Ta-ling Lee, who in *The Revenge of Heaven: The Autobiography of a Red Guard* (1972) first brought solid documentation of the Cultural Revolution to an indifferent West; and Jean Pasqualini, son of a Corsican father and a Chinese mother who after release from years in Chinese prison camps wrote *Prisoner of Mao* (1973) with the American journalist Rudolph Chelminski.

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the forthrightness showed by some toward the Soviet Union. Today, though Mao's legacy is still very much in evidence in China, the European Union is eager to end the trade embargo put in place after the Tiananmen Square massacre of 1989 and to begin selling advanced weapons systems to the Communist regime. Israel has long been a supplier of weaponry to Beijing (though this may be changing). American companies, including Loral, Boeing, and Microsoft, have provided important assistance to China's military programs and to its suppression of free speech and access to information on the Internet. Although the overwhelming majority of the world's unfree people live in China, ordinary visitors, cocooned in its luxurious new hotels, are largely unaware of the brutality around them, or, if they are aware, console themselves with the thought that, repressive trends notwithstanding, commerce and trade will eventually transform things for the better.

They need to think again. Luckily, to aid their thinking, they can now turn to *Mao: The Unknown Story*,[3] a bombshell of a book that quickly soared to first place on the best-seller lists of England and that has recently been released here. Its author is Jung Chang (born in China in 1952), writing in collaboration with her husband Jon Halliday (born in Ireland in 1939). Halliday, an excellent stylist, is proficient in Russian and other languages and was for a brief time the editor of the British *New Left Review*. Chang, who lives in England, has been known till now mainly for *Wild Swans* (1991), a brilliantly fictionalized story of three generations of women in her own family: her grandmother, a concubine whose feet were bound; her mother, initially an enthusiastic Communist but later disillusioned; and herself, who grew up in the violence and anarchy of the Cultural Revolution, during which she worked as a "barefoot doctor" in the poverty-stricken countryside while her mother was sent to a detention camp and her father was driven mad.

Mao: The Unknown Story is no ordinary book. Reaching for comparisons, one looks inescapably to Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago*. His was not the first negative account of Soviet Communism, and *Mao* is not the first book to present Mao and his collaborators as criminals. But like the *Gulag*, *Mao*, while factual, is much more than that; resting on a mass of evidence, overwhelmingly accurate and well-supported, it conveys its story in the voice not of the bloodless scholar but of the novelist and the moralist. Already Beijing is terrified of this book, going so far as to ban an issue of the *Far Eastern Economic Review* that contained an account of it. But we can be certain that pirated copies will soon be circulating in China, if they are not doing so already. Chang and Halliday may not be the first to expose Mao's crimes, but their work, even with its limitations (of which more below), cannot be ignored. Like Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago*, it delivers a death blow to an entire way of thinking.

The Mao who emerges from the pages of Chang and Halliday's book is in every way repellent. He is an ignorant, power-obsessed, manipulative, and cruel mass murderer.

To begin with, the authors show, Mao was an ignoramus, hostile to learning and to intellectuals. A drifter as a youth, he evinced talent but refused the discipline of study, including the "classics of Marxism-Leninism" that his contemporaries mastered as their fathers had mastered classical Chinese literature. Unlike many of those who rose to the top of the Communist hierarchy, he never studied abroad, nor did he travel outside of China until after he had taken power—and then only to Moscow, which formed his idea of "the West." The antique editions of Chinese classics shelved at the head of his enormous bed, which so impressed visitors to his inner sanctum and photographs of which were studied by Western intelligence agencies for clues to his "thought," were mostly plundered from the libraries of doomed scholars and arranged for show.

Mao's hatred of learning was coupled with a passion to destroy China's cultural heritage. In 1949, when he came to power, the Mongol-Ming-Qing capital of Beijing (Peking) was still intact, with its massive dressed stone walls and gates, its hundreds of temples, its traditional courtyard houses with their exquisite tile roofs, its memorial arches or *pailou*, and its distinct drama, cuisine, customs, and traditions. Everything had survived the war with Japan; were it extant today, it would constitute one of the world's most magnificent historical sites.

But Mao decreed its obliteration. In 1958, on the eve of his campaign, roughly 8,000 historical monuments were listed as still standing in the capital. Mao planned to keep only 78 of them; most were destroyed.

Ignorant himself, Mao saw to it that others were kept ignorant as well. Contrary to widespread Western belief, he spent less on the education of his countrymen than had his predecessors. He also ruthlessly limited access to learning. His policy, write Chang and Halliday, "was not to raise the gen-

[3] Knopf, 832 pp., $35.00.

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eral standard of education in society as a whole, but to focus on a small elite, predominantly in science and other 'useful' subjects." All other Chinese were to remain "illiterate or semi-literate slave laborers."

As for Mao's obsession with power, from his earliest days in the Communist party he sought control for himself and the physical elimination of those who opposed him. Already in the 1920's he was murdering his colleagues and driving his subordinates to death, gradually consolidating his own position by a series of conspiracies and betrayals.

The most important of these took place on the Long March. As Chang and Halliday demonstrate, the received version of this hegira is a myth. Whole episodes, including the great battle at the flaming bridge at Dadu, are inventions. Mao's main purpose, as the authors see it, was less to save the Communist party than to cripple the far more numerous and effective forces of Zhang Guotao, a gifted Communist general whom Mao was supposed to relieve but whom he left utterly exposed and weakened, thus enabling his own takeover.

By far the most interesting revelation in this section of the book is the authors' account of the paramountcy of Soviet influence in the establishment and growth of the Chinese Communist movement. Traditionally, this movement has been portrayed as an indigenous force, and one whose alignment with Moscow was a matter only of expediency. In fact, according to Chang and Halliday, from its foundation (by a Comintern agent) to its financing, communications system, leadership, and strategy, the party was an agent of Soviet policy—even when that policy conflicted with the Chinese national interest. Stalin early on recognized in Mao the combination of ambition, intelligence, and ruthlessness that would, so he imagined, serve the USSR better than the slavishly orthodox Marxism of many of Mao's Chinese rivals.

The subordination of Chinese to Soviet interests was clearest in the conflict with Japan during World War II. Like Chiang Kai-Shek, Mao recognized that war with Japan would be a disaster for China. But Stalin, fearing a Japanese invasion of the USSR from the east, wanted it, and Mao quickly grasped how it would serve his own purposes. By permitting the Japanese to destroy Chiang's forces while simultaneously helping to keep the USSR strong, he would be well placed to supplant Chiang as Chinese leader. Hence, according to Chang and Halliday, the successful effort by Communists in the military to start such a war, and hence Mao's decision—again utterly contrary to received myth—to sit it out.

Of course some patriotic Chinese Communists could not swallow this, but Mao saw to them, too. At his redoubt in Yan'an, and helped by the ghoulish secret-police expert Kang Sheng, he carried out purges of a number who threatened his will, dispatching them to a state-of-the-art torture facility called the "Date Garden." (Well-known to locals, this place is not mentioned by any of the Westerners who visited Mao and his wartime capital.) Over the following decades, he systematically eliminated others, with many finally perishing in the Cultural Revolution three decades later.

Mao was a consummate manipulator. With solid documentation, Chang and Halliday argue that the Hundred Flowers campaign, in which critics of the regime spoke out only to be arrested, was not a product of miscalculation (as it is presented in accounts by Mao's sympathizers) but a carefully laid trap. Similarly, the disastrous Great Leap Forward grew not out of a Marxist fascination with industrialization but out of Mao's determination to extract food from the Chinese people to pay for weapons imports and gifts to foreign leaders. The Cultural Revolution, finally, which the authors rightly call "the great purge," had nothing to do with renewing an ossified party and everything to do with simple revenge.

One of the most striking examples of Mao's manipulative skills was on display in the early 1970's in connection with the Nixon administration's "opening" to China. This, too, we learn here, was a carefully baited trap, and entirely Mao's idea rather than Washington's. By the time Nixon arrived for his famous visit in February 1972, he was convinced that, as between himself and Mao, "he was the keener of the two." But by then Henry Kissinger had already made his own secret visit in July 1971 as Nixon's national security adviser, bearing "many and weighty gifts and ask[ing] for nothing in return." Not only did Kissinger offer Taiwan on a platter, write Chang and Halliday, but he promised an American withdrawal from both Vietnam *and* Korea.

THE MAO of *The Unknown Story* is also, like many a tyrant, deeply insecure and fearful. Arriving outside Beijing in 1949, he fell into a crisis of anxiety before daring to enter the city and seize power. A superstitious man, he never once set foot in the Forbidden City where the emperors had lived, even though his residence adjoined it. Wherever he went, bombproof villas were built and staffed. He kept himself far from the public, making use later in his career of a system of tunnels

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linking his residence, the Great Hall of the People, with military headquarters in the western suburbs.

Mao delighted in personal cruelty. He tortured the women around him, including his four successive wives. When Chou Enlai, the most popular member of the regime, was diagnosed with bladder cancer, Mao ordered that he be neither told of the condition nor treated for it; even as Chou was engaged in vital negotiations with the United States, Mao toyed with his loyal servant to ensure that he would die painfully.[4]

Most importantly, Mao was the greatest mass murderer of the 20th century. Much of the killing was direct, as in the torture and purges at Yan'an. After the Communist seizure of power in 1949, the practice became countrywide. Mao set his numerical targets openly, and stressed the "revolutionary" importance of killing. In 1954, citing the "softness" of his counterparts in Communist Eastern Europe when it came to the need to "eliminate all those counterrevolutionaries," he urged his inner circle: "We must kill. . . . And we say it's good to kill."

He was as good as his word. Millions were liquidated in the first years of his tyranny alone. Later, during the famine of 1959-61, which the authors blame above all on Mao's confiscation of crops from the countryside, something on the order of *50 million* people died—men, women, children, infants. Cannibalism was not uncommon. Yet Mao continued to enjoy Lucullan repasts, served by his half-starved staff.

And so it went. Chang and Halliday's careful estimate is that by the time of his death in 1976, Mao had been responsible all in all for the death of some 70 million Chinese.

NO READER can be unmoved by this book's passion, or unimpressed by the mountain of evidence upon which it rests. The Chinese say that it takes "ten years to hone a sword," which understates by two years the amount of time Chang and Halliday have labored over this work. Halliday spent a decade in non-Chinese archives, including those of the Comintern in Moscow and the East-European Communist parties; from this has come much new factual information, as well as a clearer view of the control exercised by the Soviet Union over both the Nationalist and the Communist parties in China in the first half of the century. The unadorned and readable English prose is evidently also Halliday's, though one can sense his wife's mind behind much of it. As for Chang, she did all the Chinese research and carried out the hundreds of interviews with people in China and around the world who were personally acquainted with Mao or had knowledge of him.

Specialists, of course, will have criticisms to make, some of them justified. Neither author is trained in Sinology. This is an advantage—unburdened by the inheritance of the field, they offer a new and fresh look, naïve in the best sense of the word. But it is also a disadvantage. One searches in vain for certain staples of the mainstream literature about Mao, which, whatever its flaws, has established facts and raised issues that must be addressed.[5]

Perhaps surprisingly in light of their own previous immersion in Marxist categories (compulsory, in Chang's case), we find in *Mao* no real discussion of social or cultural forces. Instead, the human actor is everything. There is only conspiracy after conspiracy, each turning, as in the traditional Chinese novels of which Mao was so fond, on deception, betrayal, espionage, and a cold assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of other individuals.

This stress on conspiracy and personal politics to the exclusion of nearly everything else is a weakness, perhaps the greatest weakness, of Chang and Halliday's account. Many men, after all, are evil and want power, but only a handful are successful in gaining and holding it and in somehow making their people collude with them in their crimes. In mitigation, one can say that the stress on personal action and conspiracy provides a useful counterweight to the opposite, Western tendency to impose social-science theory onto a Chinese reality that it does not fit and where it does not belong. Nevertheless, there is more to the story.

Specialists will also be puzzled by specific aspects of Chang and Halliday's account (for instance, of the 1945-49 civil war, or of Mao's struggle with Nikita Khrushchev over the Taiwan Strait). And both specialists and general readers will wonder how the authors always know what Mao is thinking—even during the Long March, or on his deathbed (when his mind "stirred with just one thought: himself and his power").

But none of this should distract us from the basic

[4] In a case of measure for measure, the doctors who diagnosed Mao with Lou Gehrig's disease in the mid-70's agreed not to inform him of it—lest, knowing his days were numbered, he unleash some final purge.

[5] One example that can stand for many is a series of essays by Joseph W. Esherick about the Nationalist attempt in the civil war to capture the Communist leadership through a pincer campaign against Yan'an. Chang and Halliday state flatly that the Nationalist commander was a secret Communist who botched the operation on purpose. They make no reference to Esherick, who happens to be favorably disposed to Mao and the Chinese Communists but whose careful research does not support this conclusion.

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fact: this is the book that will wreck Mao's reputation beyond salvage. Taken whole, the indictment is too formidable to be dismissed, and any attempt at detailed refutation will inevitably pose even more awkward questions and disclose even more unsavory facts, thus dragging Mao ever more deeply into the mud.

THAT IT is long past time for such an airing should go without saying. As I indicated early on, Chang and Halliday are not the first to expose Mao Zedong as one of the greatest criminals in human history: a few non-Chinese scholars and journalists had the courage in decades past to follow the facts where they led. More recently, their work has been vindicated (and the work of their "mainstream" colleagues discredited) by Chinese scholars like Chen Jian, who in *Mao's China and the Cold War* (2001) has given an authoritative account of Chinese foreign policy that matches Chang and Halliday's, and by eyewitnesses like Mao's personal physician, Dr. Li Zhisui, whose *The Secret Life of Chairman Mao* (1994) presented the human, or more accurately the inhuman, Mao for the first time. The many dissidents within today's China have likewise kept up a steady flow of documents and news in spite of the government's best efforts to silence them.

But this brings us back to the question of Western attitudes. Evidence to indict Mao has always been adequate, if not abundant. Shamefully, however, many China specialists and others with access to information actively protected themselves from this evidence, lest it undermine the fantasy of a humane, caring leader. As with early word of the Holocaust, reports of the desperate situation in China during the 1959-61 famine caused by Mao were ignored or buried. When Mao died on September 9, 1976, the *New York Times* ran a triple banner headline and a two-page obituary that drew on much received wisdom, neglecting or dismissing the mounting evidence that contradicted it.

So *Mao: The Unknown Story* is not only a formidable but a necessary achievement: a full and convincing portrait of the destruction of tens of millions of innocent lives and the near-destruction of a civilization by a consummately evil man. Nevertheless, something is still missing, and that something has to do with what comes next. Does this atrocity, from which we can no longer turn away, have any significance beyond its own sheer horror, and does it call for any action on our part and on the part of the Chinese themselves? On this the book is silent, but of course the answer is yes.

The first action that is called for is to discover the names of the dead, locate their remains, and honor them—as has been done in exemplary fashion for the victims of the Holocaust and as is beginning to be done for the victims of Communism in Russia and elsewhere in Eastern Europe. China, however, is not only far from having initiated such a process, it completely forbids any activity of the kind. No books published in China acknowledge Mao's evil; no monuments commemorate the dead. Letters to the authorities from the mothers of students killed by the Chinese army in Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989 are never answered.

Having honored the dead, we must then seek to understand. Chang and Halliday describe the evil man, but never attempt to probe the origins of his evil or to explain why it spread through Chinese society. Not that this is an easy task. Writing in criticism of Hannah Arendt's interpretation of the Holocaust, for example, Hillel Halkin has recently observed that although the Holocaust may have been, as she stipulated, "the work of bureaucrats," these were bureaucrats whose "minds were formed by the Germany of the Weimar Republic, and of the Kaiser, and of the Christian churches. If they were easily persuaded that the Jews deserved to die, this persuasion came from an older Germany."[6] Here in other words is an effort to get beyond Arendt's mechanistic approach to some appreciation of a living human society, and to understand Hitler as something more than a devil who mysteriously parachuted in to bewitch the German people.

Proposing an analogous social or intellectual explanation for the willingness of the Chinese people to serve as Mao's slaves, to kill and to denounce one another, is an even more difficult task—and Chang and Halliday do not address it. Where in late-Qing or Republican Chinese society would one find the roots of democide? Where in traditional Chinese philosophy is the justification for mass murder? Some of the necessary ingredients were surely imported with Marxism, but that simply begs the question of how Marxism acquired its authority and why so many Chinese accepted it. These problems cry out for pondering.

NOR IS that the end of it. Given the bloody morass through which Chang and her husband lead us, it would be comforting in the extreme to know that the evil in Mao died with his body, and that China has been freed from it. But

[6] "Eichmann: The Simplicity of Evil," COMMENTARY, July-August 2005.

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that is emphatically not the case. Mao died in 1976. Thirty years on, there is still no happy ending. To be sure, China has changed—in appearance, feel, atmosphere, economic condition, and so forth. Maoist and post-Maoist China are admittedly very different. But they are also profoundly similar.

And that is the final point. Mao's atrocities are not simply of historical interest, but remain central to today's China—and to our dealings with it. As the authors write in a two-sentence "Epilogue," "Today, Mao's portrait and his corpse still dominate Tiananmen Square in the heart of the Chinese capital. The current Communist regime declares itself to be Mao's heir and fiercely perpetuates the myth of Mao."

Mao is, indeed, still revered in China as the wise and heroic founder of the People's Republic. There has never been any public criticism of him remotely comparable to Khrushchev's 1956 speech condemning Stalin.[7] Not only does Mao's embalmed corpse, with its guard of honor, lie in the midst of Tiananmen Square, visited daily by throngs of Chinese who form long lines to pay their respects. Not only does his portrait continue to hang at the Gate of Heavenly Peace a few steps from the Forbidden City, the traditional center of the Chinese cosmos. In addition, the deep structure of today's China remains as Mao made it.

Rule in China is as arbitrary and capricious as ever under Mao. The only difference is that a single man is no longer in total charge; what is theoretically still the absolute power of the party is now divided among perhaps twenty people, all lacking Mao's intelligence and skill and most working at cross purposes with each other. China is not ruled by its constitution or by its laws, nor do courts actually resolve disputes, even in the realm of commerce with foreign countries.

None of today's Chinese leaders has been chosen according to the rules of the constitution, or even according to the rules of the Communist party. Hu Jintao is in charge because Deng Xiaoping named him to follow Jiang Zemin, himself selected after the June 4, 1989 massacre to replace Zhao Ziyang, who was illegally removed and placed under strict house arrest (lasting until his death earlier this year). And how did Deng become leader? By means of a military conspiracy that ousted Mao's designated and party-approved successors.

Like Mao, today's rulers are hypocrites, proclaiming concern for the poor and disenfranchised even as they steal state assets and live lives of luxury. But now the parasitical class of Chinese Communists is much larger than in Mao's day, and so is the gap between their lives and the lives of ordinary Chinese, whether rural or urban. While desperate poverty and exploitation remain widespread, party members enjoy a privileged existence comparable only to Mao's, even as they send their children and grandchildren, along with their ill-gotten assets, overseas for safekeeping.

What of the formation of government policy? Again, it would be pleasant to report that decision-making in China has become more rational since the demise of Mao, who regularly ordered up insane projects like the destruction of the old city of Peking, or the backyard "steel" furnaces of the Great Leap Forward, or, in the days of the Sino-Soviet split, the building of immense and useless barriers outside the capital to defend against Soviet tanks. Have Mao's followers done any better with the Three Gorges Dam, or the huge concrete aqueducts intended to divert water from the south to the parched north, or the slash-and-burn industrialization (as it has been called) with its profligate waste of resources and its utter neglect of sustainability?

When it comes to China's dynamic economy, moreover, it is by no means clear that the current, export-driven approach to growth will lift China's poor, let alone help to create a society in which they will be able freely to exercise their talents and energies. Foreign markets now take the place of domestic demand (as they must, for most Chinese have little buying power), and foreign companies are invited not to enrich but to exploit a disciplined labor force under conditions in which any talk of unions or complaints about working conditions are dealt with by the secret police. Labor is kept cheap in China by the government's manipulation of the currency, and capital, the precious savings of the wretchedly poor, is wasted by state-directed bank loans to money-losing state enterprises. Chinese entrepreneurs are being squeezed out by privileged state firms on one side and privileged foreign investors on the other. Water is scarce and polluted, and the air in many places is unbreathable.

Nor does China's foreign policy make more sense now than it did under Mao, at least in terms of the Chinese national interest. To the contrary, post-Mao China has, exactly like Mao's China,

[7] As Chang and Halliday inform us, Mao was upset by that speech and remonstrated with Khrushchev. The Soviet leader replied: "Since you love Stalin so much, why don't you take his corpse to Peking?" To his colleagues, Khrushchev added: "When I look at Mao I see Stalin, a perfect copy."

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poured billions into weapons procurement while ignoring the plight of its people, especially in the countryside. The difference is that the jets and rockets and tanks produced by Mao's militarization did not work. The ones that contemporary China is purchasing, or is building with extensive foreign help, do, threatening the rest of Asia as it never was threatened even under Mao.

Violence continues in today's China: everyday killings by police and untold numbers of deaths in prisons and camps, the victims rarely named and never officially mourned. Censorship, too, remains very tight, with newspapers, radio, and television owned and operated exclusively by the government and the party. Vast sums have been spent on advanced equipment to read and track Internet traffic and block sites of which the dictators do not approve. Surveillance by closed-circuit television and the tapping of telephones is blanket in Beijing. Overseas, extensive networks of secret police monitor not only dissidents, students, and others but also Internet and telephone traffic in North America and elsewhere. Indoctrination, now stressing xenophobic nationalism rather than Mao's version of Communism, is still rampant.

SADLY, WE are not soon likely to witness in China anything like the moral clarity of Alexander Yakovlev, once a servant of the Soviet regime, then the "godfather of perestroika," and now the man entrusted with the task of memorializing the great Soviet purges and the Gulag archipelago. Yakovlev's succinct (and radically understated) verdict on both Lenin and Stalin is this: "By every norm of international law, posthumously indictable for crimes against humanity." As Chang and Halliday demonstrate, that fits Mao, too—in spades.

Unfortunately, however, the world is just beginning an honest reconsideration of Mao Zedong and his poisonous legacy, and China, still Maoist at the root, shows no inclination of moving in that direction at all. The government remains in absolute denial, and, as best as it can, it keeps its people ignorant. Chang and Halliday have given a mighty push, but there are still many to mourn, and many to punish, and much to fear.

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Jews and the Jewish Birthrate

Jack Wertheimer

NOT LONG ago, a Manhattan rabbi stunned his congregants by informing them that the future of the Jewish people would be secured not through trips to Israel, not through the battle against anti-Semitism, and not through the continued upward mobility of Jews, but in the bedroom. What shocked his sophisticated Upper East Side audience had nothing to do with his allusion to sex; these days, it is perfectly acceptable to speak in public about intimate behavior. What is not permissible in polite Jewish company is an allusion to the decisions people make about their own family lives, or to the impact of those decisions on the ability of the Jewish community to sustain itself.

It is not as if the contours of today's demographic crisis are hidden from view. "American Jews See Population, Birthrate Drop," screamed a recent headline in the *Los Angeles Times*. "Low Fertility Key to 2000 Census," proclaimed a front-page story in the country's largest-circulation Jewish newspaper. By the year 2006, according to a policy institute in Israel, the American Jewish community, hitherto the world's largest, will for the first time fall behind the Jewish community of Israel in size.

Nor is it as if Jewish leaders are unalarmed. Last spring saw a series of private meetings, including one called by the president of the state of Israel, to discuss the demographic situation and what to do about it. Thus far, the result has been much hand-wringing and little action. This is hardly surprising: the problem of Jewish population decline is complex, and huge difficulties lie in ambush for any plan aimed at reversing it. But an even more intractable obstacle lies elsewhere. Until it is confronted, there is little prospect of accomplishing anything beyond hand-wringing.

HOW MANY Jews are there in the United States? That in itself is not a simple question. Indeed, the very process of counting has become wrapped in controversy. The most recent National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS), conducted under the auspices of the federations of Jewish philanthropies in the years 2000-01 with guidance from a stellar team of scholars, was blemished by a series of polling mishaps. Damagingly, the survey stretched out over a two-year period, some data were lost, and some respondents were never asked the full battery of questions.

Even before this, however, demographers had come to an impasse over whom to count as part of the Jewish population—a question necessitated by the increasingly porous nature of American society and the country's generally high rates of intermarriage. For example, should an individual raised as a Christian or as an adherent of an Eastern religion be considered a Jew if he or she had one Jewish

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parent? What if a born Christian who has never undergone any type of formal conversion asserts an identification with the victims of the Holocaust or in some way claims to have joined the Jewish people? What about the very common situation of a Gentile not married to but living in the same household with a Jew? What about the children and the grandchildren of intermarried Jews? If they were not raised as Jews, should they nevertheless be considered part of the Jewish population?

The result of all this confusion is disagreement as to the total size of the American Jewish population. Although most scholars have settled on a figure of between 5.2 and 5.5 million, a few, counting both Jews and the Gentiles living with them, would add as many as 1.2 million more. On the basis of the consensus figure of 5.5 million, the Jewish population of the United States has, at best, remained static for the past 50 years, despite the influx during that same period of at least a half-million Jewish immigrants.

If there is debate over absolute numbers, there is far wider agreement on the patterns of behavior within the Jewish population—behavior confirmed by dozens of community studies and separate opinion polls. Two trends are particularly telling. First, in terms of median age, Jews are seven years older than other Americans. Second, even by the most cautious figures, at least half of all marriages involving a Jew are to non-Jews. Neither trend suggests demographic vitality.

A NEW REPORT by Tom W. Smith documents the first of these tendencies. Entitled *Jewish Distinctiveness in America: A Statistical Portrait*,* it marshals considerable evidence for the relatively advanced age of the American Jewish population. Among religious groups, only liberal Protestants exceed Jews in this regard; among ethnic groups, only Americans of British ancestry do. Among Americans of all kinds, moreover, Jews have the fewest number of siblings, the smallest household size, and the second lowest number of children under eighteen at home.

Smith's study also makes plain why the Jewish age structure has become so skewed. For one thing, as the 2000-01 NJPS confirms, Jews marry later than other Americans, with the greatest disparities occurring in the age group between twenty-five and thirty-four. For Jewish women in particular, late marriage means lower rates of fertility compared with other Caucasian women—who themselves are barely producing babies at replacement level (figured at 2.1 children). The fertility gap is especially enormous among Jewish women under the age of thirty-five; even though the gap narrows considerably over the course of the next ten years, at no point do Jewish women attain the fertility levels of their non-Jewish peers or bear children in numbers sufficient to offset population losses from natural causes.

It is true that low fertility rates among Jewish women are not a new phenomenon. Economic advancement, the availability of birth control, and rising educational achievement caused Jewish fertility to start dropping as long ago as the middle of the 19th century in Europe and later in other modernizing societies like the United States. Nor, as is well known, is the phenomenon limited to Jews, or to the U.S.; in contemporary Europe and Japan, it has reached proportions that threaten catastrophe.

Still, Jewish women in the United States are significantly less fertile than their white, Gentile counterparts. To explain this fact, the demographer Frank Mott has pointed to the extraordinary rates of educational achievement among Jewish women, who spend significantly more time than their Gentile peers in programs of higher learning. For many of them, still more childless years follow as they work to advance their careers.

Add to all this the losses sustained through the high rate of intermarriage. Once upon a time, it was thought by at least some sociologists that intermarriage could prove to be a demographic boon. In the aggregate, said the optimists, it would take fewer intermarried Jews producing children identifying themselves as Jews to result in a net gain. But nothing of the sort has happened.†

Not only does the birth rate among intermarried Jews tend to be even lower than among in-married ones, but nearly three-quarters of children raised in intermarried families go on to marry non-Jews themselves, and only 4 percent of these raise their own children as Jews. As for their links with Jewish life, only a minority of children raised by dual-religion parents identify themselves with Judaism or with the institutions of the Jewish community. Although a number of adult children of intermarriage do express "somewhat" of a connection with the Jewish component of their identity, such feelings are rarely translated into behavior. Like their parents, most tend *not* to join synagogues, contribute

* Based on surveys conducted by the National Opinion and Research Center, the report was released earlier this year by the American Jewish Committee.

† In what follows I draw from the as yet unpublished research of the sociologist Bruce Phillips.

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to Jewish causes, visit Israel, or participate in Jewish rituals nearly as much as do the adult children of in-married families.

THE CUMULATIVE effect of these demographic trends is now being felt and will only become amplified as time goes by. In a community that has long since ceased to replace its natural losses, continued low fertility rates mean that the number of children in the communal pipeline will soon drop sharply, causing a decline over the next decade in enrollments in Jewish schools and other institutions for the young. This will be further accelerated by the losses through intermarriage. Before long, as Bruce Phillips has concluded, "there will be fewer practitioners of Judaism" in the United States, and "this development will at some point become evident in the number and/or size of synagogues and other Jewish institutions."

But this brings us to the one major exception to the general rule—namely, Orthodox Jews. Not only do the Orthodox suffer many fewer losses from intermarriage, but their fertility rate is far above the Jewish norm. As against the overall average of 1.86 children per Jewish woman, an informed estimate gives figures ranging upward from 3.3 children in "modern Orthodox" families to 6.6 in Haredi or "ultra-Orthodox" families to a whopping 7.9 in families of Hasidim. These numbers are, of course, difficult to pin down definitively, but anecdotal evidence is compelling. In a single year, according to a nurse at one hospital in the Lakewood, New Jersey area serving a right-wing Orthodox population, 1,700 babies were born to 5,500 local families, yielding a rate of 358 births per thousand women. (The overall American rate is 65 births per thousand women.)

The statistical evidence behind these birthrates is laid out in the 2000-01 NJPS. Orthodox adults are younger on average than other American Jews, with more than half falling between the ages of eighteen and forty-four. As for children eighteen and under, these make up 19 percent of the Orthodox community; the figure for the total American Jewish community (including the Orthodox) is only 12 percent.

It does not take a prophet to discern the eventual impact of these trends. The Orthodox are the smallest of the three major denominations; in numbers, the Conservative and Reform movements far outstrip them. But among synagogue-affiliated Jews, the Orthodox sector contains more children than either of the other two. If the Orthodox continue to retain the loyalties of their young people, as they have mostly done over the past 30 or 40 years, they will become an ever larger, more visible, and better represented part of the total community, and will be in a position to insist on a larger share of communal expenditures—as some Orthodox leaders are already doing.

But what accounts for the high fertility rates of Orthodox Jews? It is certainly true that they marry much earlier than other Jews. Almost two-thirds of Orthodox women are wed by the age of twenty-five, and 90 percent by thirty-five. (For Conservative women, the comparable figure at age twenty-five is 9 percent, for Reform women 3 percent, and for women who identify themselves as "just Jewish" 14 percent; by age thirty-five, only slightly over half of Reform women are married.)* These Orthodox women go on to bear children at a younger age, and to have larger families.

But this just begs the question of causation; something is at work to produce those figures. It is hardly enough to say, as some do, that the Orthodox lag behind the rest of the Jewish population in levels of educational attainment. That is emphatically not the case with the modern Orthodox, and it is less and less the case in the Haredi community. Nor has the fact that Orthodox women are pursuing higher education and entering the labor force in large numbers impeded their determination to marry young and bear children.

A recent class exercise at an academically-oriented, modern-Orthodox day school in Manhattan may offer some insight here. The assembled fifteen-year-olds, boys and girls alike, were asked how many children they themselves hoped to have. Only two gave two as their ideal number, and none wanted fewer than that. A large majority named four. Whether all of these young people will actually follow through on their stated aspirations is not the point; the point is the aspirations themselves. It is unlikely that a similar exercise would yield the same results in Jewish schools of other denominations.

In brief, we are in the realm of norms and values. Orthodox communal culture encourages child-bearing, and has more thoroughly insulated itself from the "substantial downward pressures" that, in the reasonable judgment of Frank Mott, are currently depressing the overall size of the Jewish population—and that may themselves be the results of a rather different value system.

* These figures, based on the 2000-01 NJPS, were provided to me by Dr. Laurence Kotler-Berkowitz of the United Jewish Communities.

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REMARKABLY, THERE has been little inquiry into any of these matters—that is, into why so many in the Jewish community are remaining single, or are having smaller families, or are intermarrying. In light of the pain expressed by many Jews about what has happened within their own families, this willed ignorance is in itself shocking. Thirty- and forty-year-old singles speak freely of their loneliness, and their inability to meet eligible Jewish mates. Because of late marriages, huge numbers of Jewish couples are struggling with infertility or with the difficulties of finding babies to adopt. Parents of adult children cannot fathom why their offspring are still living alone or moving from one transitory relationship to the next. Tens of thousands of families are trying to cope with the consequences of intermarriage or find themselves at a loss to explain to their children why, even though an uncle or aunt is married to a Gentile, it is not all right to consider "interdating."

No doubt, many feel there is not much to be said about any of this—that the twin trends of low fertility and high intermarriage are forces of nature, not to be questioned but merely endured. Besides, one can always point to the larger social forces at work, from the sexual revolution, to the felt economic need to maintain dual-career marriages, to the obsessive quest for success, to a predisposition among the best-educated to regard family itself as a suspect category and child-rearing as a chore best left to others, to the triumph of the cult of individualism and freedom of personal choice, and so forth.

The litany is well-known, and its constituent elements have surely affected Jews as much as anyone else. In fact, to judge by the figures cited above, they have affected Jews more than others. But, precisely because that is so, it is useful to consider the particular beliefs and social values embraced by the majority of American Jewish families.

Tom Smith's study of distinctiveness is a good place to start. His surveys demonstrate, for example, that American Jews are exceptional in the emphasis they place on raising independent-minded children. Asked to rank the relative importance of five values to be passed on to the next generation, overwhelming numbers identify their highest priority as the ability to "think for himself or herself," far more than those naming "working hard" or "obedience."

That no other ethnic group shows results like these is a finding in which many Jews would undoubtedly express pride. But there is surely a price to be paid for this unmodulated emphasis on independent-mindedness. At least in part, it has been paid in the coin of group allegiance and even of fidelity to one's own parents when it comes to things like marriage and family. The same can be said for the value that Jews place upon education. Although this certainly accounts for their disproportionate presence at top-tier colleges and universities, it, too, is pursued at the cost of other values.

An outfit called the Curriculum Initiative has estimated the number of Jewish children enrolled in private prep schools at 50,000. Many of these private schools are under Christian auspices. When asked to explain their choice, parents regularly extol the extraordinary education their children are receiving. They may well be right about that; but choosing one course of action entails rejecting another. A report by the National Study of Youth and Religion notes the extent to which young Jews fall behind *every other* American group in religious identification and practice. Young people well understand their parents' priorities—and live them out.

THESE PARTICULAR trends may seem relatively easy to explain; others are more opaque. Take the spiraling intermarriage rates. To the extent that these are understood at all, they are generally ascribed to two factors. The first is that Americans in general think nothing these days of crossing ethnic and religious boundaries in marriage; the second is that, for Jews, intermarriage is the natural result of a great blessing, namely, the radical diminution of anti-Semitism in American society. Both explanations focus on trends beyond the control of Jews and therefore requiring no response.

In fact, however, we know very little about how Jewish men and women actually regard each other and why so many of them opt to date or to marry non-Jews. Is it true, as one hears, that Jewish men do not want to marry someone who reminds them of their mother, or that Jewish women do not want to marry someone who reminds them of their father? And if it is, why have they only recently begun acting on this disinclination in such massive numbers? Might it be the reverse—that, for example, Jewish men want to marry someone *more* like their mother than the typical young Jewish woman of today, and that Gentile women happen to fit the bill?

Similar questions might be asked about the decisions of young Jews when they think about forming a family. What values and beliefs correlate with delayed marriage? How is it that Jewish adults who have themselves grown up in intact homes, and whose parents' enduring togetherness might be

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thought to serve as a positive model, nonetheless choose to remain single? Despite the vital relevance of such questions to the future of the Jewish community, they have gone unexplored.

In the meantime, the outlook of the organized Jewish community has been characterized mostly by denial. Faced with irrefutable evidence of demographic decline, communal leaders have worked to "reframe" the discussion. The reframing goes like this: the Jewish population should be seen not as hemorrhaging, but rather as evolving new forms of expression. Yes, today's Jews are choosing to behave differently from Jews in the past, but, if treated with dignity and respect, they will surely return to play a positive role within the community. Yes, Jews are intermarrying at high rates, but if intermarried couples are offered a more welcoming environment, they will participate gladly in Jewish activities and both they and their offspring will come to identify strongly with Jewish life. Yes, Jews are producing fewer children, but what counts is quality, not quantity. Yes, fewer Jews are affiliating with synagogues and other communal institutions, but eliminating exclusionary and inhospitable attitudes will cause the situation to reverse itself.

The challenge of demographic decline, then, is to be met by inclusiveness, pluralism, and a welcoming atmosphere. The worse the decline has grown, the more fervently has this mantra been invoked—and not just invoked, but acted upon. Here, for example, is a "Statement on Human Sexuality" issued in 1998 by the rabbinate of the Reform movement:

> In our age, the traditional notion of family as being two parents and children (and perhaps older generations) living in the same household is in the process of being redefined. Men and women of various ages living together, singles, gay and lesbian couples, single-parent households, etc., may be understood as families in the wider, if not traditional sense. "Family" also has multiple meanings in an age of increasingly complex biotechnology and choice. . . .

Having thus radically expanded the definition of a Jewish family to accommodate what it calls "contemporary secular norms," the statement goes on to encourage "adults of all ages and physical and mental capabilities to develop expressions of their sexuality that are both responsible and joyful." Never once, however, does it encourage Jews to marry, or even mention that marriage is the one element previously thought to be the *sine qua non* of Jewish sexual expression and family life.

A second document, this one issued by the Reconstructionist rabbis, also avoids an endorsement of marriage as a Jewish ideal. "Contemporary liberal Jews," it states, "affirm the equality of both partners and understand that it is the obligation of each partner to treat the other with dignity. It is the qualities of mutual respect, trust, and love that we consider the fundamental attributes of loving partnerships." Marriage, disparaged elsewhere in the document as "historically a relationship of two unequal parties," evidently fails to meet these criteria. While praising the family "as the primary, stable unit of intimacy," the statement quickly adds that "many old and new kinds of families can fulfill these values."

Not much detective work is needed to discover the impulse behind these rejections of traditional Jewish teachings. In order to welcome Jews who live in unconventional family arrangements, and in particular to eliminate any negative judgment of gays and lesbians, the rabbis have rushed to scuttle what Judaism has always held about the centrality of marriage. They have done so, moreover, largely in order to address the discomfort, real or imagined, of the 1 or 2 percent of the Jewish population that is gay or lesbian, slighting their duty to instruct the other 98 percent on the Jewish understanding of sexuality and family. The same drive to offer hospitality at any cost—together with a rote allegiance to the supposed legacy of the civil-rights movement and the demands of "equality"—motivates the several hundred rabbis who now officiate at so-called interweddings.

THE OBVIOUS damage here is to the integrity of Judaism and to two millennia of Jewish preachment. In the case of intermarriage, there is also a subtler consequence. The fact is that Jewish men have consistently outpaced Jewish women as intermarriers. This means that Jewish women wishing to marry confront a shrinking pool of potential Jewish mates. The result in female behavior can be seen quite vividly in the figures gathered by the 2000-01 NJPS.

In the 1960's, when rates of intermarriage first began to take off, many more Jewish men than Jewish women married non-Jewish spouses; in the 1970's, Jewish women caught up with and overtook them. In the 1980's, the men spurted ahead again, and in the early 1990's they were again matched by women. We are now in the next spin of an upward spiral: intermarriage rates for Jewish men in the late 1990's once more exceeded the rates for Jewish women; before the end of this first decade of

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the 21st century, as the pool of marriageable Jewish men shrinks still further, we can expect to see still another spike in the rate of intermarrying Jewish women.

Many of the rabbis who perform intermarriages claim to be ardent champions of women. To what are they contributing, however, and what are they abetting? In this area, too, there is no lack of testimony to the damaged lives of actual people. Jewish newspapers around the country have carried personal articles by women lamenting the paucity of Jewish men to marry. At public gatherings, women speak bitterly of being driven to look for non-Jewish mates, and of deciding to do so as long as they have some assurance that their children can be raised as Jews. A small but growing number have taken the extraordinary step of bearing children through artificial insemination, and reportedly some, in the name of Jewish continuity, have contemplated asking the organized community to support their choice financially.

The working assumption of Jewish officialdom seems to be that the acceptance and encouragement of every kind of "family arrangement" will insure that Jewish life will thrive. This is not only a gross distortion of Judaism, it is palpably false. Under the banner of unconditioned equality, the needs of the affiliated are ignored, and the overall Jewish population continues to contract.

But—one can imagine the scoffing reply—can anyone seriously believe that contrary declarations by rabbis or communal leaders would have any salutary impact on behavior? By refusing to officiate at intermarriages, would rabbis reduce the incidence of such marriages in the slightest? If Jewish organizations undertook actively to encourage young Jews to marry and raise children, would anyone pay attention?

This line of thinking is the necessary counterpart to the mantra of inclusiveness, and now passes for realism in much of the Jewish organizational world. If nothing else, however, the exceptionalism of Orthodox Jews suggests what is wrong with it. Beliefs, communal norms, and expectations do in fact play a powerful role in shaping behavior—not overnight, but over time. The pro-natalism of the Orthodox community was a policy deliberately nurtured over the decades through an educational system, through countless sermons and homilies by Orthodox rabbis, and through inculcating in generations of young Jews the positive value of standing apart from those "contemporary secular norms" to which the authors of the "Statement on Human Sexuality" appeal for validation.

In the face of today's secular norms, the Orthodox call on an additional source of strength: the power of *Jewish* norms and obligations. Until other sectors of the community are prepared to speak boldly and forthrightly about Judaism's truly countercultural ideas, they will continue to lose larger and larger numbers of the next generation, and to face a smaller and smaller future.

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Justice to Pissarro

Dana Gordon

For over a century, the painter Paul Cézanne (1839-1906) has been considered the father of modern art. His ascendancy, which began around 1894, had a tidal influence on the development of the avant-garde, leading to both abstraction and expressionism, commanding the fealty of Picasso and Matisse, dominating the standard narrative of the development of modernism through the late 20th century, and lingering today.

But things did not always look this way. For most of the late 19th century, it was not Cézanne but the painter Camille Pissarro (1830-1903) who was revered as the greater master, and as one of the most influential creators of modern art. Thanks to the twists of history, however, Pissarro's reputation subsequently ebbed to the point where he came to be recalled, often dismissively, as a vaguely important and skillful landscapist among the Impressionists and, dimly, as the first great Jewish modern artist.

Over the past quarter-century, in a quiet countermovement, Pissarro's significance has been revived. Essays and exhibitions, including one at the Jewish Museum in New York in 1995, have shed new light on his achievement, suggesting in particular that Cézanne's own career would not have been possible without the precedence of Pissarro. Recently abetting this trend has been a vibrant and informative show organized this past summer by the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York and now on tour.*

From 1861 until the mid-1880's, Pissarro and Cézanne carried on a deep artistic and personal interaction that had a determining effect on the future of art. This interaction is the subject of the exhibit now on tour. But despite its many virtues, the show does not by itself illumine the full story of the Pissarro-Cézanne relationship, or of Pissarro himself; nor does it really make clear how to appreciate the latter's work. Most cultured eyes still see early modern art, including Pissarro's, through a Cézanne-derived screen, and a whole understanding of the modernist movement in art follows from this perception.

Is it right? As far back as 1953, the abstract-expressionist painter Barnett Newman complained that the Museum of Modern Art, the temple of modernism in art, had "dedicated itself" to the proposition that Cézanne was "the father of modern art, [with] Marcel Duchamp as his self-appointed heir." In so doing, Newman declared, the museum was perpetuating a "false history." There is much to Newman's charge.

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* *Pioneering Modern Painting: Cézanne and Pissarro, 1865–1885.* The exhibition, curated by Joachim Pissarro, the painter's great-grandson, closed in New York on September 12. It will be shown at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, October 20, 2005-January 16, 2006, and at the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, February 27-May 28, 2006.

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CAMILLE PISSARRO was born on the island of St. Thomas in the Caribbean, a child of middle-class Jewish merchants originally from Bordeaux. Schooled in Paris from 1841 to 1847, he went back to the island to enter the family business, but eventually sloughed off his family's expectations to go draw and paint in Venezuela. He returned to Paris for good in 1855, followed not long afterward by his parents.

In 1860, Pissarro began a liaison with Julie Vellay, his mother's cook's assistant. They married in 1871, had eight children, and remained together until Camille's death in 1903. The relationship cost him a large part of his mother's affections and financial support; as a consequence, most of Pissarro's adult life would be a dire struggle for money. But his open and defiant commitment to Julie was an early example of the personal and artistic independence for which he became known. It also provided a kind of shelter for his friends Cézanne and Monet and their paramours during the family storms caused by their own pre-marital liaisons.

After the mid-1860's, Pissarro took up residence in small towns just outside of Paris, where living was less costly and his favored rural motifs lay nearby. He made frequent trips into the city, often staying for days, but many artists also came out to visit and work near him—most notably Claude Monet for six months in 1869-70 and Cézanne and Paul Gauguin in the 1870's and 80's. Of Camille and Julie's children, several became artists themselves, most prominently Lucien, the eldest son. Pissarro's letters to Lucien offer a trove of insight into a painter's life and into the history of 19th-century art.

Pissarro was twenty-five when he returned to Paris from the Caribbean, already an experienced landscape painter and free of the stultifying conventions of the French academies. During the late 1850's, he sought out his great predecessors in French art: Corot, Courbet, Delacroix, and others. Influenced by them, but never a disciple, he integrated what he learned into his own vision. At the same time as Edouard Manet, Pissarro developed a new approach emphasizing the full, direct response of the artist to the nature in which he exists.

Pissarro's significance was recognized early on by his peers—and fitfully by officialdom. In the 1850's, 60's, and early 70's, international "Salon" exhibitions offered the only hope for commercial success and acclaim in France. But admission was controlled by adherents of the Ecole des Beaux Arts, whose teachers held to a petrifying methodology. Vanguard artists had to deal with the Salons or, somehow, without them.

One of Pissarro's unorthodox landscapes was accepted for the 1859 Salon, where it was noted appreciatively by the critic Alexandre Astruc. In 1863, his participation in the Salon des Refusés—a protest against the official Salon—made him anathema, but his work was so strong that it was nevertheless accepted for the Salons of 1864, '65, and '66. In his review of the last of these, Emile Zola, the great novelist and art critic, and a supporter of the avant-garde, wrote about Pissarro: "Thank you, Sir, your winter landscape refreshed me for a good half-hour during my trip through the great desert of the Salon. I know that you were admitted only with great difficulty." In the same year, the painter Guillemet would write, "Pissarro alone continues to produce masterpieces."

These early responses indicate clearly enough that Pissarro was creating something unusual. In fact, he was inventing abstraction, the ingredients of which he had gleaned from his precursors. As early as 1864, he was using elements of landscape as abstract designs, making lines and shapes be lines and shapes as well as representations of objects and scenic depth.

The "winter landscape" to which Zola referred, *Banks of the Marne in Winter*, was one of these works. Included in the MOMA show, it is full of the abstraction Pissarro was inventing. The trees on the left of the painting are an essay of lines, the houses on the right make up a play of triangular and trapezoidal shapes. The entire lower-right quadrant is a kind of "color-field" painting, concerned with the communicative powers of color and brushstroke independently of what they depict. The smudges of paint on the far right, standing in for houses, declare that smudges of paint carry qualities of beauty in their own right.

In addition to conveying a view of nature, and in addition to being visual essays made up of lines, colors, and forms, Pissarro's paintings were an expression of his own ideas and feelings. That is, the way he painted—his brushstrokes, his "facture"—made the viewer aware of the emotions of a specific person at a specific moment in time. In the avant-garde of that era, there was, indeed, a great deal of interest in the expression of the self in art. Terms like "temperament" and "sensation" were gaining currency, particularly in descriptions of Pissarro's art. As Zola would write of him in a review of the 1868 Salon:

> The originality here is profoundly human. It is not derived from a certain facility of hand or from a falsification of nature. It stems from the very temperament of the painter himself and

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comprises a feeling for truth resulting from an inner conviction. Never before have paintings appeared to me to possess such an overwhelming dignity.

IN THE late 1860's and early 70's, Monet, Pierre Auguste Renoir, Frédéric Bazille, Alfred Sisley, and Pissarro worked, in Pissarro's words, like "mountaineers roped together at the waist." In 1869 they painted along the Seine, engaged by the colored shapes presented by the water's reflections. The resulting works, especially Renoir's and Monet's, are justly famous as among the first fruits of Impressionism. As for Pissarro's role in that movement, it has been sadly obscured by the fact that nearly all of his paintings from that time are lost. An estimated 1,500 pieces, 20 years' work, were destroyed in the 1870-71 Franco-Prussian war when the Prussians occupied his home. (He and his family had managed to escape to London.)

Monet has often been represented as the genius of Impressionism, and a genius he certainly was. He was also the instigator of the first Impressionist exhibition in 1874. Nevertheless, in a review of that show, the critic Armand Silvestre could refer to Pissarro as "basically the inventor of this painting." One can see why.

Because of Monet, Impressionism came to be thought of as an art of color and light, an art in which structure and composition played lesser roles. But Pissarro's Impressionist landscapes and townscapes of the 1870's are a different story. Justly celebrated for their observation of light, color, and atmosphere, and for the natural appearance of the people and places in them, these commanding, lyrical works also extend the artist's exploration of structure and composition. The "process of visual dissection" one observes in these paintings—the phrase is Christopher Lloyd's, in his 1981 monograph *Camille Pissarro*—is Pissarro's particular triumph, and it makes Monet's paintings, beautiful as they are, look picturesque and simplistic by comparison. Not for nothing did Zola insist that "Pissarro is a fiercer revolutionary than Monet."

And Cézanne? For over 20 years, from the time they met in 1861, he sought and received Pissarro's advice and help. The young Cézanne, awkward in art as in person, was ridiculed in Paris—but not by Pissarro, who, perhaps seeing something of himself in the impolitic frankness of the younger man's work, recognized his unusual talent immediately and never faltered in his support.

The two became close friends; by the early 1870's, Cézanne was so eager to work in Pissarro's company that he moved near him. That they influenced each other is beyond doubt. "We were always together!," Pissarro wrote of those years, when the volatile Cézanne's attachment was intense. In particular, Pissarro's obsessive approach to work, to mining his own vision, helped Cézanne to release his blocked personality, showing him how emotional content would come on its own and allowing him to channel his anxious energy into the formal problems of painting.

From Pissarro, Cézanne learned abstraction, the expressive little brushstroke, emphasis on form rather than sentiment, and how to make form with color and without outline. Frequently, the two artists painted the same view at the same time; a number of the resulting pictures were hung next to each other at the MOMA show, giving the viewer an extraordinary "you are there" sensation.

In the mid-1870's, Cézanne began a long seclusion in Aix, near the Mediterranean, removing himself from the Paris scene almost entirely. From there, in 1876, he wrote to Pissarro, "It's like a playing card. Red roofs against the blue sea." He was acknowledging that he was painting the roofs, walls, and fields in Aix as flat, abstract forms dominated by shape and color, as Pissarro had painted ten years earlier.

During the long years prior to Cézanne's breakthrough, Pissarro provided virtually all the exposure for his work. He encouraged the merchant Père Tanguy to show Cézanne's work at his paintshop-gallery, and urged collectors and artists to see it there. Later he convinced a new art dealer, the soon-to-be-famous Ambroise Vollard, to give Cézanne the 1895 show that made his name.

LATER IN life, Cézanne said that "Pissarro was like a father to me: he was a man you turned to for advice, and he was something like *le bon Dieu*." It is possible that Cézanne was somewhat intimidated by this divinity. At MOMA, Pissarro's awesome *Kitchen Garden* of 1877 was hung next to Cézanne's painting of the same subject in the same year, *The Garden of Maubuisson*. Cézanne's version has its beauty—but, when seen with the Pissarro, it feels like a sketch, a few notations of musical ideas. By contrast, the Pissarro has the force of a great symphony.

Around this time, Cézanne's technique was evolving into repetitive arrangements of strokes. This so-called "constructive-stroke" technique was implied in many earlier Pissarro paintings as well, including, in the MOMA show, *The Potato Harvest* (1874) and, explosively, *L'Hermitage in Summer, Pontoise* (1877), an astonishing composition dense

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with essays of brushstroke and the poetry of color planes. But, except for a few paintings explicitly experimenting with Cézanne's technique (three from 1883-84 were in the MOMA show), Pissarro never really adopted it, preferring instead to give individual meaning to every moment and stroke in the composition.

To be sure, Cézanne's marks add up: every spot in his mature painting is oriented toward the frontal impact of the whole, with the overall tension of the surface creating the sense of flatness that carried so much influence in the later development of abstract art. In the viewer's perception, everything in a Cézanne painting pushes forward, all the marks of paint moving together like latticework. This forward push of the thin, pulsating surface came more and more to be the dominant note in Cézanne's paintings. But it was achieved at the cost of his own declared wish "to make out of Impressionism something solid and durable, like the art of museums."

Cézanne acknowledged this cost, writing that "coloring sensations force me to produce abstract passages that stop me from covering my whole canvas or from pushing to the full delineation of objects." In other words, he could not complete the paintings as scenes or as recognizable objects because he had already completed them as compositions of purely visual events. His use of techniques of abstraction richly enforced but did not get much beyond the impression of overall flatness.

Pissarro's paintings, by contrast, have tremendous depth. They invite you in; you can enter and breathe and look around both the abstraction and the depicted scene, as if taking a tour of the artist's thought process. (In this connection, it is especially instructive to compare two paintings included in the MOMA show, Pissarro's intricate *The Conversation* [1874] with Cézanne's *House of the Hanged Man* [1873].) But Pissarro's fullness, warmth, and solidity are not what later painters got from the early abstract artists, or what became the accepted taste of the 20th century. Instead, they got Cézanne's flatness and assertion of color, often without the high quality of painting that made Cézanne's own work so convincing.

"PISSARRO WAS possessed of a remarkable eye that led him to appreciate the genius of Cézanne, Gauguin, and [Georges] Seurat before all other painters," wrote Françoise Cachin, the director of the Musées de France, in 1995. This is very true, and it applies to more painters than she named.

Gauguin was Pissarro's protégé for many years, and his mature work, seemingly very different from Pissarro's, is full of the latter's inventions. Vincent van Gogh, the troubled genius who arrived in Paris in 1886, also spent time with Pissarro, learning from him that, as he would later write, "you must boldly exaggerate the effects of either harmony or discord which colors produce." Vincent's brother Theo, an art dealer in Paris, was another Pissarro enthusiast, whose death in 1891 dealt a blow to Pissarro's commercial hopes.

Nor were Gauguin and Van Gogh the end of it. In the mid- to late-1880's, Pissarro would be accused of aping the neo-Impressionism and pointillism of the much younger Seurat and Paul Signac. But Pissarro did not follow them, he led them. Although Seurat certainly had his own sensibility, all of his work's stylistic attributes can first be found in Pissarro: the color theory, the tightly compacted strokes, the way the dots of paint coalesce into abstract patterns, even the stiff hieratic figures. One can trace, in specific paintings, what Seurat learned from Pissarro, even as Pissarro went deeper into the human spirit and saw farther into the future.

In the 1890's Pissarro developed a new aesthetic density in his complex cityscapes, figure paintings, and landscapes. These, although less well known today than his earlier landscapes, made a strong impact, most notably on Henri Matisse (1869-1954). The meeting in 1897 of this struggling young painter, who would rightly come to be considered the greatest artist of the 20th century, with the living embodiment of painting's long journey in the 19th moved Matisse to tears. He came away likening Pissarro to the long-bearded figure of the prophet Moses as sculpted on the Well (or Fountain) of Moses, a well-known Gothic masterpiece in Dijon.

Pissarro was indeed a Jew with a long white beard and a biblical mien, and Matisse was hardly the first to liken him to Moses. But Matisse may have been thinking less of the figure and more of the fountain—of Pissarro as a living source, with a flowing generosity of spirit. He certainly saw in Pissarro an exemplary survivor of a long, difficult life dedicated to art. If, later on, when Pissarro was no longer so esteemed, Matisse spoke less of him and more of Cézanne, in 1898 he was frequently in the apartment Pissarro had rented to paint his views of the Tuileries. Pissarro was Matisse's master, present in his work in many ways, including some later attributed to Cézanne.

Pissarro was also still a presence in 1900-01 when Pablo Picasso entered the Paris art world, and

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his touch and his inventions can be seen both in the dense little brushstrokes of the classical cubism associated with Picasso and Georges Braque and in the flat, colored planes of later cubism. Many later painters, too, including those who sought an abstraction free of the constrictions of cubism, carried a Pissarro gene, whether or not they were aware of it.

TESTIMONIES TO Pissarro's unique character have come down to us through personal recollections and through his interactions with other artists. Though not shy about his own work, he was neither a raging egotist nor a pushy self-promoter—two useful personas for an artist. He was generous in sharing his insights and, as we have seen, unselfish in the support he gave to others. "The first thing that struck one in Pissarro," Ambroise Vollard observed, "was his air of kindness, of delicacy, and at the same time of serenity." Thadée Natanson, editor of *La Revue Blanche* in the 1890's, recalled him as "infallible, infinitely kind and just." In the phrase of Christopher Lloyd, whose writings have contributed greatly to the revival of Pissarro, he played an "almost rabbinical role" in French painting.

Unfortunately, history finds personality an easier subject than art, and Pissarro's personality has on occasion been invoked either to diminish or, conversely, to justify his work, in both cases with a distorting effect. At one point, for instance, his long-lived enthusiasm for anarchism was held against him. ("Another mistake of Pissarro's in which is manifest a certain pretension to socialist political activity," wrote a critic in 1939, deprecating a pastel of peasant women chatting under a tree.) In our own age, by contrast, his anarchism has counted *for* him: thus, in a 1999 essay, the influential Marxist art historian T.J. Clark committed pages of exotic political exegesis to a pointless effort to attach Pissarro to far-Left politics. In fact, the painter stood foursquare against the usurpation of art by politics or any other cause. "The art that is most corrupt," he maintained, "is sentimental art."

And then there is Pissarro's Jewishness. Did it, perhaps, play a role in the eventual eclipse of his stature? Though he did not participate in religious formalities, Pissarro never dissimulated his Jewish identity—to all appearances, he enjoyed it. But anti-Semitism was rife in all social classes in the France of the 1860's and later, despite the constitutional guarantees of freedom of religion instituted under Napoleon I. By the 1890's, when France had become a republic, there were anti-Semitic riots during the panic over anarchism, and then the Dreyfus affair.

The avant-garde was itself tinged with anti-Semitism. Cézanne took the side of the anti-Dreyfusards. Both Degas and Renoir—old friends and admirers of Pissarro—disparaged him in anti-Semitic terms, and worried about being associated with him. Here is Renoir, in 1882: "To continue with the Israelite Pissarro, that taints you with revolution."

Still, one can make too much of this. Anti-Semitism does not appear to have been the main determinant in the avant-garde's view of Pissarro. He was, to say the very least, accepted as one among them. Indeed, it is possible that some of Pissarro's contemporaries considered his Jewishness an important and positive element in what he brought, both to the art of painting and to the art of human existence. In likening Pissarro to Moses, the giver of the law, Matisse and others were undoubtedly paying tribute not only to his new way of seeing but to his way of living—moral, responsible, whole. Whatever complex of factors explains the ebbing of his reputation, his Jewishness seems to have played, at most, a minor role in it.

SINCE 1980, much of the writing on Pissarro has implicitly conceded his primacy—but not his preeminence. "It sounds almost as if Cézanne was borrowing Pissarro's eyes," observes the MOMA catalog in discussing one of the exhibit's paintings. Or again: "Every work produced by Cézanne at that point [1881] appears to refer to an earlier painting by Pissarro."

This diffidence—"almost as if," "appears to refer"—is altogether misplaced. Many of Pissarro's great contemporaries considered him the greatest of them all, and anyone looking today for the true sources of modern painting can find them most wholly and harmoniously present in him. Just as Barnett Newman was right in 1953 to decry the "false history" that holds Cézanne to be the father of modernism in art, Cézanne himself was right in maintaining, "We are all derived from Pissarro."

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OBSERVATIONS

Iraq and the Conservatives

Joshua Muravchik

ARGUMENTS ABOUT the wisdom of America's invasion of Iraq will not be resolved until the outcome becomes clearer, which may not be for some time. In the meantime, the news from Iraq continues alternately to hearten and alarm, providing grist for the war's supporters on one day, for its opponents the next.

The most interesting arguments are not between Left and Right. The Left long ago lost any coherent voice on national security. That it has yet to recover that voice was illustrated in last year's presidential race by the dizzying self-contradictions of John Kerry, not to mention the Democrats' embrace of the anti-American buffoon, Michael Moore. Instead, the most interesting arguments are within the Right, most of which supports the war but some of which contains its most trenchant and acerbic critics. Gary Rosen, COMMENTARY's managing editor, has compiled the best of these intra-conservative polemics in a new anthology, *The Right War? The Conservative Debate on Iraq*.*

The principal line of division on the Right separates neoconservatives from more traditional conservatives. What is meant by "neoconservative" has only a limited connection to the historical meaning of that term, which designated a collection of intellectuals and writers who migrated from Left to Right in the 1960's and 1970's. Some of the important "neocon" thinkers represented in this book—Max Boot, David Brooks, Victor Davis Hanson, William Kristol, and Robert Kagan, for example—are too young to have been among that group. Rather, in the current context, the term signifies an approach to foreign policy based on an expansive view of American interests akin to what has historically been called "liberal internationalism," but more muscular in approach.

The basis of that approach is the conviction that, given the centrality of America's position in global politics, even distant problems are likely to come to roost here eventually, and that they are usually better dealt with earlier than later. A corollary is a high estimation of the strength of ideological and moral factors in international politics, as opposed to the view that material elements—money, weapons, resources—are all-important. Thus, the war in Iraq, an American action at once militarily assertive and idealistic in its goals, and fought on a shore distant from the site of any attack on the United States, has often been labeled a "neocon" war, even though the officials who decided on it—Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, Rice—were never before thought of as neoconservatives.

On the other side, conservatives to whom the prefix "neo" does not apply make up a more diffuse group. Roughly, they are "realists," who believe that foreign policy should hew to a tight concept of national interest defined by geography, visible threats, and measurable assets, and "isolationists," who see domestic corruption, or worse, in America's active efforts to engage the wider world. The individuals from these camps who are represented in Rosen's collection range from the editors of *National Review*—they support the Iraq war, insisting that

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it is "not a neocon war" but a "war of national interest"—to the nativist Patrick J. Buchanan, an ardent opponent not only of this Iraq war but the one of 1991 as well. In between are grudging supporters like Robert F. Ellsworth and Dimitri K. Simes, who have dissented from Bush's democratizing goals but not from ousting Saddam Hussein, and cautious critics like George F. Will.

ASIDE FROM shedding light on some matters of political theory and on the texture of conservative thought, Rosen's book serves the valuable purpose of helping to distill the essential issues that are on the table in debates about the war. The exchanges would no doubt have had a different tone and balance, and different nuances, had the compendium included liberal voices. But the principal serious questions would not have been different.

As I see it, these questions reduce to five. First, should we be embarked on a "war against terrorism," or would we have been better advised to take a lower-key approach? Second, does Bush's strategy of trying to bring democracy to the Middle East as an antidote to terrorism make sense? Third, was removing Saddam Hussein a necessary or at least advisable step in the war against terror and in the promotion of democracy in the Middle East? Fourth, have the defects in the conduct of the war been so grave as to compromise the achievement of its objectives? Fifth and finally, what should we do now?

Let me review some of the more interesting points made by Rosen's contributors on these questions, buttressing them here and there with the arguments of liberals. In coming to the fourth question, I will also adduce another recent book, this one by a liberal author with interesting things of his own to say about Iraq. Finally, I mean to interrupt and argue back as I go along.

ON THE first question, Norman Podhoretz, crediting the coinage to Eliot A. Cohen, calls our present struggle "World War IV." Others find this much too stark. To be sure, no one in any part of the American mainstream denies that we should counteract terrorism. But there are many who believe that Bush has gone overboard with his rhetoric about an "axis of evil," with the demand that other nations choose between us and the terrorists, and with his readiness to back his words with force.

Many liberals, for example, would prefer a law-enforcement approach centered on bringing Osama bin Laden and others responsible for specific outrages to justice. This viewpoint is expressed explicitly by some, like George Soros, and it is implicit in the hue and cry over alleged violations of the civil liberties of terrorism suspects. (Whereas, if one accepts that we are at war, then by the standards of wartime the derogations from procedural norms since 9/11 have been so minor as to warrant scarcely a peep.)

Few conservatives, for their part, would find a juridical solution adequate to the problem of terrorism. But, in Rosen's collection, a kindred point is made by Francis Fukuyama, who maintains that the American government overreacted to the 9/11 attacks. Objecting to Charles Krauthammer's assertion that Islamic terrorism poses an "existential threat" to America, Fukuyama writes:

> If these words have any real meaning, then they should include only threats to our existence as a nation or as a democratic regime. There have been such threats in the past: the Soviet Union [for instance]. But it is questionable whether any such *existential* threats exist now. Iraq before the U.S. invasion was certainly not one. . . . Al Qaeda and other radical Islamist groups aspire to be existential threats to American civilization but do not currently have anything like the capacity to actualize their vision.

On the basis of this analysis, Fukuyama and some other conservatives (and even more liberals) have faulted the administration for doing too little to secure international legitimacy for U.S. actions through authorization by the United Nations or some other means.*

No doubt our diplomacy might have been more adroit at one turn or another; when is this *not* the case? But the only obvious way that the United States could have won appreciably more support would have been by softening its approach and lowering its goals. Fukuyama apparently would welcome this on the grounds that the threat is less than "existential." But is that the right criterion?

The attacks on America of September 11, 2001 were new in their scale and technique but not in their essential nature. On the contrary, Middle Eastern terrorists had been assaulting and killing Americans for 30 years, with little or no response from us. Podhoretz recapitulates some of this history but cannot possibly provide it all. The jihadists have murdered our diplomatic personnel in numerous countries, hijacked our airliners and cruise ships, blown our civilian aircraft out of the sky, killed our Marines in their barracks, soldiers in their beds, sailors in their berths. They have kidnapped, tortured, and murdered us by the ones, the tens, and the hundreds. On 9/11 they succeeded at last in getting thousands of us in a swoop. To which they have said, "praise God," and have aimed still higher. It is far from unimaginable that they could next kill tens of thousands.

Would *that* constitute an "existential" threat, justifying war? Should we care? It already constitutes an intolerable one.

OF COURSE, to say that the conflict

* Fukayama's essay, published originally in the quarterly *National Interest*, was followed in the next issue by a sharp rejoinder from Krauthammer, also included in Rosen's book.

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amounts to war does not tell us what to do about it. Like the cold war, the war against terrorism cannot be fought only with military means. The political side of U.S. strategy is democratization of the Middle East, which is the subject of the second question I listed above.

The theory behind President Bush's strategy rests on an extrapolation from the well-publicized observation that democracies do not go to war with one another. From this he infers that democratic governments will not abet terrorism and that people who enjoy the opportunities afforded by democracy, and experience its ethos of give-and-take, will not become terrorists.

This reasoning has been challenged on several counts. Some in *The Right War?*, including Henry Kissinger and Owen Harries, warn about what free votes in the Middle East might yield. In Harries's words, "the attempt to force history in the direction of democracy by an exercise of will is likely to produce more unintended than intended consequences."

There are also those who doubt that the Arab or Muslim nations of the Middle East are capable of sustaining democracy. Charles R. Kesler faults Bush for confusing "the natural right to be free and the capacity to be free," adding, "the question is whether some cultures and religions are less compatible with freedom and democracy than others." Fukuyama, despite having done more than anyone else to popularize democratic universalism through his theory of "the end of history," has similar concerns. "I have never believed that democracies can be created anywhere and everywhere through sheer political will," he writes, adding that he also has doubts about America's suitability as an agent of such change: at "nation-building," he comments, our country's "overall record is not a pretty one."

Whatever Fukuyama may mean by the term "nation-building," the United States has, in fact, had many successes as an agent of democratization, whether by military means or through economic aid, political pressure, and diplomatic intervention. It is no accident that of the regions where American influence weighs most heavily, Europe, Latin America, and the Caribbean are today almost entirely democratic, and East Asia largely so. (Of the several exceptions, China, obviously, is a very large one.)

But are Arabs ready for democracy? This we do not know. What we do know is that in recent years, democracy has traveled to places that seemed no more congenial. We know, too, that where democracy has come, its consequences in the realms of peace, development, and political moderation have been beneficial. There is little reason not to expect the same if we succeed in democratizing the Middle East.

That, to be sure, does not dispose of Harries's and Kissinger's warnings about unintended consequences. Our efforts could destabilize existing regimes, giving rise not to democracy but to chaos or to new dictatorships even less to our liking. There is no denying that this danger has existed in Iraq—which gets us to the third of the questions I posed earlier.

CONCEIVABLY, ONE might embrace the concept of a "war against terrorism," and even the strategy of promoting Middle East democracy, and still demur from the war in Iraq. Writing in Rosen's anthology, James Kurth contends that the Iraq war "is indeed likely . . . to cause . . . grave and long-term injury to . . . U.S. efforts to promote democracy abroad." But Kurth, a realist, is also no supporter of promoting democracy, so his complaint has the appearance of crocodile tears. More credible is Fukuyama, who worries that America's deficit of legitimacy in Iraq will undermine its idealistic agenda.

It is certainly true that the war in Iraq has deepened America's unpopularity in the Arab world, and perhaps diminished our influence. At the same time, however, and despite their rage at Bush, the Arabs of the Middle East have never before been in such a democratic ferment as they are today, and it is foolish to pretend that American policy is not the catalyst. As the Lebanese Druze leader Walid Jumblatt, ordinarily no friend of America's, attested in February: "I was cynical about Iraq. But when I saw the Iraqi people voting three weeks ago, 8 million of them, it was the start of a new Arab world. The Syrian people, the Egyptian people, all say that something is changing. The Berlin Wall has fallen. We can see it."

Could someone who is a supporter of the wider war against the Islamist threat nonetheless dissent from the campaign in Iraq? In theory, certainly. Nor is this historically unprecedented. World Wars I and II were replete with arguments about which front to open when, and some proponents of the cold war did not support America's effort in Vietnam.

The current case is trickier. Ousting the Taliban from Kabul and al Qaeda from its Afghan sanctuary was our obvious first move. After that, there was room to differ about what should come next. One might have maintained that Iran was a more important objective than Iraq (as did Michael Ledeen, for one) or that Syria was an easier one. Still, once the President had decided that our next step was to topple Saddam, it is hard to see how anyone who supported the broader effort could stand aloof from this particular instance of it. Whether or not Iraq was our best move at that moment, once the battle was taken there, to lose it would risk losing the entire war against terror.

BUT THIS leads to the fourth question. Even those who have supported the war in Iraq, and the thinking that led to it, may still fault its con-

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duct. Eliot Cohen puts it this way: "the handling of the war has made an admittedly risky strategy far more precarious and costly than it need have been."

Has the administration defeated its own laudable policy by its execution of it? For help in answering this, we may turn to the book to which I alluded earlier: *Squandered Victory: The American Occupation and the Bungled Effort to Bring Democracy to Iraq* by Larry Diamond.*

A senior fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution and the co-editor of the *Journal of Democracy*, Diamond is arguably the nation's preeminent academic authority on global democracy. Although a Democrat, and an opponent of the Iraq war, he was invited by Condoleezza Rice, then Bush's national security adviser, to join the occupation authority in late 2003 as an adviser on democratization. He spent the first three months of 2004 on this mission.

Diamond's judgment of what he saw there is damning. The occupation, he writes, was a failure, a "squandering of a decisive, potentially historic military victory. Mistakes were made at virtually every turn." Of the military officers he spoke to, "none . . . thought we had enough troops in Iraq." U.S. officials ignored "warnings of possible civil disorder after the fall of Baghdad," with the result that "the collapse of public order in the aftermath of the war had devastating, long-lasting consequences. It undermined Iraqis' confidence in the United States and in the postwar order."

Why did the U.S. government ignore its own experts? The problem, according to Diamond, lay with the Defense Department, which insisted on monopolizing policy at the expense of the State Department. To make matters worse, each of the two Americans chosen to run the occupation did a poor job. First came Jay Garner, who presented "a bungling, wavering American presence, in which no one was really in charge." Then Garner was sacked in favor of Paul Bremer, who erred in the opposite direction. "If Bremer was sincere in wanting to bring democracy to Iraq," writes Diamond, "it was at his own pace and in his own way."

In the end, Diamond concludes,

> our grand ambitions for . . . educating Iraqis about democracy were ground down by the hard realities of the situation we faced—the shortage of resources and people, the makeshift character of our organization, the cumbersome pace of our deliberations, the economic and civic devastation of the country, and, most of all, the relentless and escalating violence.

What would Diamond have had us do differently? His answer, aside from platitudes like listening more to the Iraqis or letting the State Department have its place at the bureaucratic table, seems to have two main points. First, he would have sent many more troops and used them more decisively; in particular, he would have crushed the forces of the Shiite upstart Moqtada al Sadr, whose viciousness he illustrates in grim detail. Second, he would have arranged a much larger, if not dominant, role for the United Nations in the administration of Iraq. Indeed, he tells us that he worked intensely behind the scenes to facilitate this even before leaving the U.S. for Baghdad.

Arguments similar to Diamond's can be found in Rosen's book: Ellsworth and Simes, for instance, would have turned Iraq over, lock, stock, and barrel, to the UN and the Arab League. In any case, Diamond's two-pronged remedy is self-contradictory. The UN would hardly have consented to use force as decisively as the United States has. Quite the opposite: the UN's preference has always been to give miscreants like Saddam Hussein or Slobodan Milosevic one more chance after America's patience has been exhausted. If Kofi Annan had not rushed to Baghdad in 1998 to pull Saddam's chestnuts from the fire when the Iraqi dictator unilaterally overturned the original UN weapons-inspection regime, it is at least conceivable that the present war would not have occurred. And that Lakhdar Brahimi, the Algerian diplomat whom Annan sent to Iraq, and whom Diamond praises to the skies, would have allowed occupation forces to crush the unauthorized Iraqi militias beggars belief.

DIAMOND'S PRESCRIPTION is so strained as to make one question his diagnosis. It is no less difficult to accept his certainty, based on the events of 2003 and 2004 alone, that the American effort in Iraq is a failure. But—and we are now at the fifth and final question—this is where some of the realist voices in Rosen's volume come through with refreshing clarity.

"Success is the only exit strategy," writes Kissinger. "Getting chased from Iraq would make it open season on U.S. interests throughout the Middle East," explain the editors of *National Review*. This, if anything, understates the case. As Podhoretz notes, the jihadists already have more support among the world's billion-plus Muslims than we find it diplomatic to acknowledge. If they defeat America in Iraq, their star will rise all around the Islamic world, and moderates will be hard-pressed to resist them.

Fukuyama, as we have seen, would seem to demur on this point: because the jihadists do not challenge America's military supremacy as the Soviet Union did, our credibility is not so precious an asset. To this one might respond that, more than any other foe we have faced, the jihadists' motivation and strength depend on their belief in their divine mission. They batten on each success, and especially on each successful attack against a superfi-

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cially mightier force. Bin Laden never tires of explaining that the Muslim victory over the Soviets in Afghanistan, in which he took part, is what convinced him of the possibility of vanquishing the other infidel power, America.

It is true that America lost the war in Vietnam and went on to win the larger cold war. Similarly, we might triumph in the end over jihadism even if we were to lose in Iraq. But, proportionally, this would be a much bigger setback. Vietnam was always a distant corner of the cold war, whose epicenter lay in Berlin. But Iraq is right in the heart of the Arab world, and it is now the central front of World War IV. Defeat there would be more akin to a cold-war defeat in Germany than in Indochina. We might eventually recover from it, but only at a price—in the lives of Americans, both military and civilian—that would make what we have been through so far seem like child's play.

In the Matter (Again) of J. Robert Oppenheimer

James Nuechterlein

THE OPPENHEIMER question is back—not that it ever went away. Famous initially as the "father of the atomic bomb," the scientist J. Robert Oppenheimer (1904-1967) is more commonly remembered today as, at once, a far-sighted critic of U.S. nuclear policies and a victim of anti-Communist hysteria, a man unjustly tarred as a security risk in a case said to be full of significance for our own security-conscious times.

To summarize Oppenheimer's story in this way is, however, radically to oversimplify it. In understanding both him and what happened to him, it is best to begin with the man himself. We are helped in this endeavor by a huge new biography, *American Prometheus: The Triumph and Tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer* by Kai Bird and Martin J. Sherwin.* Much of the information that follows is drawn from their impressively comprehensive research, which is regrettably in the service of a highly tendentious interpretation.

A complex and enigmatic individual, J. Robert Oppenheimer was, at the same time, one whose lifelong habits of mind ran within consistent and finally quite narrow bounds. He was a brilliant scientist, a person of learning, culture, and tremendous accomplishment. But both the "triumph and [the] tragedy" that Bird and Sherwin refer to in their subtitle trace to circumstances of his birth and upbringing that he never transcended.

The immediate world that shaped the young Oppenheimer was the world of the Ethical Culture Society, an offshoot of Reform Judaism that allowed its adherents to escape what its founder, Felix Adler, had dismissed as Judaism's "narrow spirit of exclusion." Oppenheimer's parents, upper-middle-class immigrants from Germany, had been married by Adler, and they immersed their son in the Society's nonreligious religion of "deed, not creed," a universal humanism committed to the ideals of social justice, rationalism, and free-thinking critical inquiry. He received his primary and secondary education at the Ethical Culture school on Manhattan's West Side, and the socially engaged scientist he became was a precise fit with the values of his childhood and adolescence. He never forsook

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those values, and despite intermittent dabblings in philosophy and theology, he never got beyond them.

Oppenheimer combined his personal commitments with intense ambition and extraordinary ability. Educated at Harvard, Cambridge, and Göttingen, he was already, by his mid-twenties, at the forefront of American physics. Göttingen, where he received his doctorate in 1927, was then the world leader in theoretical physics, and Oppenheimer was introduced there to the developments in quantum mechanics that were transforming the discipline.

During the following years, he did cutting-edge work in a number of areas, but it was only after the entry of the U.S. into World War II that his personal and public preoccupations came together in an intensive concern with the prospects of nuclear weaponry. Worries that German scientists might be working on an atomic bomb spurred the creation in the U.S. of the Manhattan Project. In late 1942, its chief, General Leslie Groves, named Oppenheimer as the program's scientific director.

Oppenheimer was fascinated by the scientific challenges of the project; his strong anti-fascism committed him to its purposes. But his politics threatened to short-circuit his career. The FBI had opened a file on Oppenheimer in 1941, and suspicion about his Communist-party (CP) connections endangered acquisition of a security clearance.

Was he a Communist? He always denied membership in the party, and the government, despite thorough investigation, never proved otherwise. But if he was not a Communist, he was, by his own testimony, about as fervent a fellow-traveler as could be imagined. At one time or another, many of those nearest him held CP membership; they included his wife, his brother and sister-in-law, a pre- and post-marriage lover, a number of graduate students to whom he was a charismatic model, close friends, and assorted colleagues. He contributed financially to party causes, wrote and edited party pamphlets, involved himself in party-dominated unions, attended party functions, and belonged to a discussion group whose other participants consisted of party members.

Bird and Sherwin accept Oppenheimer's disclaimers of party membership; with some equivocation, so does Priscilla J. McMillan in *The Ruin of J. Robert Oppenheimer*, another recent study of his career.* Oppenheimer may indeed never have actually obtained a party card, but he did everything short of it.

General Groves, who was thoroughly familiar with Oppenheimer's political background—and who was himself a political conservative—nonetheless considered him indispensable to the Manhattan Project. In late 1943, several months after Oppenheimer had begun work at the Los Alamos laboratory, Groves finally ordered that the disputed security clearance be granted. He knew that Oppenheimer knew how tight the watch on him would be, especially in the narrowly bounded world of Los Alamos. More than that, Groves concluded that Oppenheimer's ambitions as a scientist would trump his politics.

And so they did. After signing on with the atomic project, Oppenheimer withdrew from radical associations and involvements, abandoning his open advocacy of the USSR and never thereafter straying far from the conventional positions of the establishment Left.

BY ALL accounts, Oppenheimer's work at Los Alamos was as invaluable as Groves had foreseen. He combined his known theoretical abilities with engineering practicality and a talent for management that had not previously been evident. As the project moved forward, a number of the scientists began to nurture second thoughts about the morality of their efforts, especially after the German capitulation in May 1945. Not so Oppenheimer, who took professional satisfaction in the bomb's successful test on July 16. His rueful quotation from the *Bhagavad-Gita*, "Now I am become death, the destroyer of worlds," was likely a later emendation.

Nor did he support the physicist Leo Szilard and others who urged that the bomb be demonstrated to the Japanese before its use in battle. That, he argued, was a decision for political and military officials to make, not scientists. In fact, he participated in formulating instructions for the bomb's successful explosion over Hiroshima. And in the immediate, euphoric aftermath of the Japanese surrender, he was, as Bird and Sherwin note, "comfortable in the adulation" that came to him as the man most responsible for the weapon that ended the war.

Afterward, however, there came reconsiderations. Oppenheimer began to wonder whether the A-bomb had been used unnecessarily against an already defeated enemy. More broadly, he worried about international relations in a post-atomic world. From his earliest days at Los Alamos, he had urged in particular that the Russians be informed about America's nuclear intentions. Now, along with Niels Bohr and others in the scientific community, he concluded that the only alternative to a suicidal arms race was international control of nuclear power. He dreamed of world government; short of that, he argued that the U.S. must at least accept "partial renunciation" of sovereignty with respect to atomic energy. Rationality must reign over irrationality in the competition of nations; the model on which postwar politics had to be built was the model of science, in which secrecy was anathema, truth knew no national boundaries, and individuals were citizens of the world.

OPPENHEIMER WAS hardly alone in the immediate postwar era in such

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utopian imaginings. But the cold war that developed between the U.S. and the Soviet Union from 1946 onward induced sober rethinking among most people about the possibilities of universal cooperation. Oppenheimer, however, continued in effect to wish the Soviet-American conflict away. In the process, his public role became ambivalent to the point of contradiction.

Soon after the war, Oppenheimer resigned his position at Los Alamos and spent the rest of his career as director of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton. But, after Albert Einstein, he was America's most famous scientist, and his participation on a number of government boards, especially as chairman of the General Advisory Committee (GAC) of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), made him a highly influential insider. Cherishing his influence and his access to power, he wanted at the same time to function as a prophetic critic.

In brief, starting with the end of the war and thereafter, Oppenheimer became a persistent opponent of American policy on issues of national security. If he had discarded his enthusiasm for the Soviet Union, he would never be so intense an anti-Communist as he had been an anti-fascist. Russia, he believed, could be dealt with. And so, having led the effort to develop the atomic bomb, he now did everything he could to block development of its proposed successor, the hydrogen bomb. His opposition was both technical—he doubted that the weapon could work—and moral—if it could be made to work, it would be so powerful as to be an agent of genocide.

Edward Teller, Oppenheimer's fellow physicist and an outspoken champion of the H-bomb, thought him a victim of misplaced guilt over the use of the A-bomb and of poor judgment about the likelihood of reaching an agreement with the USSR. Others, like FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, or Lewis Strauss, a member and later the chairman of the AEC, had more ominous misgivings, based in part on their awareness of Oppenheimer's radical past. By the early 1950's, suspicions about him had become, if not commonplace, then reasonably widespread in government circles. Even a number of his fellow scientists began to register doubts with the Truman administration about his judgment and loyalty.

The man who forced the issue to public attention was William Borden, little known at the time and little known to history. Borden, who served as staff director of the highly influential Joint Committee on Atomic Energy of the House and Senate (JCAE), was a liberal Democrat, an internationalist, an opponent of McCarthy, and a supporter of Oppenheimer's view that the shroud of secrecy needed to be lifted from discussion of nuclear policy. His work on the JCAE, however, had familiarized him with Oppenheimer's persistent opposition to H-bomb development and testing, and he found it difficult to account for this on rational grounds. By the close of 1953, having pored over Oppenheimer's AEC security dossier, Borden submitted a single-spaced, three-and-a-half page letter to the FBI summarizing the record and concluding dramatically that "more probably than not J. Robert Oppenheimer is an agent of the Soviet Union."

Borden's letter, which Hoover forwarded to the Eisenhower White House, had to be dealt with. The Republicans had made a point of criticizing Truman for suppressing evidence of subversion, and Eisenhower now ordered that a "blank wall" be erected between Oppenheimer and any security information. After extensive discussion, it was decided that Strauss would present Oppenheimer with a list of charges based on Borden's letter, giving him the choice of either acquiescing in the suspension of his security clearance or insisting on an AEC hearing. After some initial indecision, Oppenheimer opted for the hearing.

The three-man board that heard the case in April and May 1954—and that finally ruled against Oppenheimer by a vote of two to one—was chaired by Gordon Gray, a Democrat, a former Secretary of the Army, and at the time the president of the University of North Carolina. The other members were the business executive Thomas Morgan and the University of Chicago scientist Ward Evans, who was the lone dissenter.

NOTHING THE board heard, and nothing in its conclusions, sustained Borden's suspicions; indeed, the board concluded unequivocally that "Dr. Oppenheimer is a loyal citizen." Why, nevertheless, did it decide against reinstating his clearance?

The case against Oppenheimer rested on his extensive Communist connections prior to Los Alamos and on his postwar opposition to the H-bomb project. On the latter issue, the board argued, first, that Oppenheimer had been less than candid in his testimony—for instance, by asserting that he had opposed only a "crash program" for the weapon when in fact he had opposed its development altogether. Secondly, the board held that his opposition, to which as a citizen he had every right, raised questions about his judgment on essential issues of national security.

On the former issue—Oppenheimer's Communist past—the board mostly recapitulated information already known when he first signed up with the Manhattan Project. The major additional item, and the one that weighed most heavily against Oppenheimer, was the Chevalier affair. Sometime in late 1942 or early 1943, Haakon Chevalier, a professor of Romance languages at Berkeley and a CP member, approached Oppenheimer, who was a close friend, with a suggestion from a third party that he pass on to

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the Russians information concerning nuclear secrets. By all accounts, Oppenheimer refused the suggestion—but, contrary to security regulations, failed to report the incident for several months. When he finally did so, moreover, he initially lied about the details in an apparent effort to protect both Chevalier and himself. The full truth came out only over time and under duress. It did not help that Oppenheimer maintained contact with Chevalier as late as December 1953, shortly before Strauss informed him of the charges against him.

The Gray board's conclusion concerning Oppenheimer's overall lack of candor, his "susceptibility to influence" from questionable sources, and his "serious disregard for the requirements of the security system" obviously relied heavily on the Chevalier incident. So too did the conclusion of the AEC commissioners in the next step of the process. Upholding the Gray board by a vote of four to one, they ignored the H-bomb issue altogether and ruled that he had forfeited the government's trust because of "fundamental defects in his character."

IN HIS dissent to the Gray board's decision, Ward Evans emphasized that the information on Oppenheimer's past Communist associations, including the Chevalier affair, had been known to the AEC in 1947 when it reaffirmed the security clearance ordered by General Groves four years earlier. Why should a record disquieting but acceptable in 1943 and 1947 be seen as disqualifying in 1954? A similar then-and-now argument was made by Lloyd Garrison, Oppenheimer's chief lawyer. It was necessary, Garrison said in his summation, to see events from the early 40's in the context of that time, when, unlike in 1954, the Soviet Union was perceived not as an enemy of the U.S. but, on the contrary, as America's "gallant ally."

Times had indeed changed. Between Oppenheimer's earlier clearances and the year 1954 there lay not just the general shadow of the cold war but a whole series of specific events—revelations of espionage in the Hiss, Rosenberg, and Fuchs cases and, above all, Communist aggression in Korea. These had transformed the political landscape. Behavior once seen as innocent or at least understandable now took on a more incriminating color. Oppenheimer himself conceded as much in his testimony. During the war years, he said, a person's status as a fellow-traveler—which he admitted he had been—need not automatically have excluded him from work on a secret war project; in 1954, it necessarily would.

Over the same time span, moreover, a number of people who had worked closely with Oppenheimer during the war had turned against him—not out of doubts concerning his loyalty but because, observing his response to postwar developments, they had lost faith in his judgment. Of these the most noted, and the most discounted, was Teller, whose opinion was suspect because of his various disagreements with Oppenheimer, both public and private. But not subject to the same suspicion of personal bias was the distinguished physicist Ernest Lawrence, Oppenheimer's Nobel prize-winning colleague at Berkeley. The two had been so close that Lawrence named one of his sons after Oppenheimer. But over the years he had become distrustful of his friend's political judgment, finally concluding that "he should never again have anything to do with the forming of policy." Lawrence was prepared to testify to that effect at the hearing, but at the last moment suffered a disabling attack of ulcerative colitis (or of cowardice, in the view of Lewis Strauss.)

Of all the testimony against Oppenheimer, probably the most telling was that of General Groves. Not only had Groves, against considerable opposition, insisted on Oppenheimer's initial clearance, he had continued to defend him over the years. While disapproving of the scientist's politics, he never for a moment considered him a spy. Now his testimony, too, emphasized the change in political circumstances. Still defending his 1943 decision, Groves noted that under the much stricter security rules at the postwar AEC, and given the subject's past associations, the Chevalier case in particular, "I would not clear Dr. Oppenheimer today."

DEFENDERS OF Oppenheimer, then and since, have insisted that the changed circumstances referred to by Groves and others had unfairly stacked the deck against him. Thanks to the cold war, America had fallen prey to the politics of hysteria. Only now, with the hearings involving Joseph McCarthy and the U.S. Army, hearings that overlapped the Gray board proceedings, could one glimpse the beginning of the end of the Wisconsin Senator's long reign of terror. Oppenheimer, in this view, was McCarthy's final victim.

This was literally untrue—both Hoover and Strauss maneuvered successfully to keep McCarthy out of the Oppenheimer affair—but it did not deter friends of the scientist from viewing the case as an episode in McCarthyism. To begin with, in their view, the Gray board operated under prejudicial and unfair procedures. Prior to the hearing, the board had had access to classified FBI documents that Oppenheimer's lawyers were not permitted to review because they lacked security clearances. More generally, the hearings did not adhere to the strict rules of evidence and due process that would have been observed in a full-fledged trial. Like other liberal and left-wing critics before them, Bird and Sherwin conclude that the hearings were therefore "patently unfair and outrageously extrajudicial."

Neither Oppenheimer nor his

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lawyer, however, had made this argument at the time. On the final day of the hearing, Oppenheimer himself declared that he was "grateful to, and I hope properly appreciative of, the patience and consideration that the board has shown me." Garrison, while asserting that the hearing had been more adversarial than he or his client had expected, added "I recognize and appreciate very much the fairness which the members of the board have displayed."

Procedural probity aside, a parade of character witnesses for Oppenheimer—including such pillars of the scientific and political establishments as Hans Bethe, George Kennan, John J. McCloy, Vannevar Bush, and James Conant—strongly questioned why, in the absence of evidence of espionage, a man who had contributed so much to his country should be branded a security risk. Was it not simply that he had put forward unpopular political opinions? Some scientists also saw the attack on Oppenheimer as an attack on their community, a warning that independent thought would not be tolerated. With or without the explicit participation of Joseph McCarthy, militant anti-Communism had produced a pressure for conformity in which, they asserted, minority ideas tended to be treated as political heresy.

This was not a frivolous argument. Undoubtedly, the intensely ideological atmosphere of the cold war blurred intellectual and political distinctions that should have been more zealously maintained. When it came to labeling, the anti-Communism of the 1950's could be as sloppy as the anti-fascism of the 1930's and 1940's, and had the impetus of greater political force behind it.

Such large analytical categories tempt us beyond the particularities of the Oppenheimer case. These particularities, however, are what the Gray board had to deal with, and one cannot reasonably read its decision as an expression of McCarthyite ideology. Its conclusions were considered, balanced, and thoughtful. The board recognized how decent people had been led to Communist sympathies in the 1930's, and it displayed both sensitivity to the tension between individual freedom and national security and sympathy with a scientific community that felt itself under attack.

Was the majority decision then right? That is not so easy to resolve. In a time of heightened concern over national security, the board had to weigh Oppenheimer's suspicious ideological past, with its possible influence on his scientific or political judgment, against his impressive record of accomplishment in the national interest. Those who think the latter should have overridden the former have a serious case, and it is strengthened by the possibility that some who worked to bring Oppenheimer down—Lewis Strauss in particular—harbored personal animosities so deep as to cause them to confuse private grievances with national priorities.*

HOWEVER ONE sorts out these complexities, it remains a failure of historical imagination to reduce the Oppenheimer story to a political and moral melodrama. That, unfortunately, is what Bird and Sherwin do in their recent addition to the already substantial literature on the affair. This is especially regrettable since it is unlikely that any future scholars will match the prodigious research that went into their book, which has been 25 years in the making. In some cases they will be unable to do so: most of the more than 100 people interviewed for *American Prometheus* are now dead.

Priscilla McMillan's *The Ruin of J. Robert Oppenheimer* is a more modest enterprise, but it, too, is bound by the conventions of the received liberal wisdom concerning the early cold-war era. Within those conventions, Oppenheimer must be a victim of anti-Communist hysteria and his opposition to American policies on nuclear weapons must be self-evidently correct. But the assumption of victimhood, which both of these books lavishly indulge, cuts against the stated views and actual behavior of such reluctant critics of Oppenheimer as Groves, Lawrence, and Gray, who, while themselves undoubted anti-Communists, understood that McCarthyism was a distortion, not an expression, of the anti-Communist impulse.

So also with Eisenhower, who at the conclusion of the Oppenheimer case congratulated Strauss on the way it had been handled. In the President's view, this offered "such a contrast to McCarthy's tactics that the American people would immediately see the difference." The contrast might not have been so unambiguous as Eisenhower imagined, but, despite what these books suggest, neither was it nonexistent. The decision on Oppenheimer's security clearance was one about which reasonable people could legitimately disagree.

Even more dubious is the assumption that Oppenheimer was a prophetic and wise critic of American policy. That assumption rests on a soft revisionist view of the cold war that supposes the conflict could have been avoided, or at least greatly ameliorated, if alternative policies had prevailed. In this view, the nuclear arms race—in which America always led the way—was central to the hardening of cold-war attitudes, and the failure of the Truman and Eisenhower administrations to heed Oppenheimer's urgings of greater openness and flexibility toward the Soviet Union represented a "missed opportunity" to dispel mutual suspicions.

This surely gets things backward. The arms race was not the cause

* Oppenheimer, a man of great charm, also had an arrogant and cruel streak, and he had inflicted personal and public humiliations on Strauss that left enduring resentments. These may have led the AEC chairman to insist on the public repudiation of a man who could have been quietly retired from a position of influence over government policy.

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but the symptom of cold-war antagonisms. The United States arrived at loggerheads with the Soviet Union, as it had earlier with Nazi Germany, not primarily over misunderstandings, let alone over issues of weaponry, but over fundamental differences in ideology, values, and behavior. It then armed itself accordingly. Oppenheimer knew his science, but that knowledge gave neither him nor his fellow scientists any special wisdom as to the uses to which scientific developments should be put.

All of which brings us back, the long way around, to his grounding in Ethical Culture, itself an early variant of what would later come to be called secular humanism. The ideals of disinterested rationalism and the objectively self-evident social values on which Oppenheimer had been raised prepared him admirably for a life in science, but not at all for a life in politics. They also gave him, as they still give those who think like him, a quite undeserved presumption of moral superiority.

Music

Why They Don't Write 'em Like They Used To

Terry Teachout

Alec Wilder, who died in 1980, was one of the least classifiable artists who has ever lived. A semi-classical composer who doubled as a sometime writer of popular songs, he was responsible for a handful of standards ("I'll Be Around," "While We're Young") and a much larger number of lesser known but beautifully crafted ballads ("I See It Now," "South to a Warmer Place," "Did You Ever Cross Over to Sneden's?") that were performed and recorded by such celebrated singers as Frank Sinatra and Mabel Mercer. Late in his life, he was persuaded to set down his thoughts on the great popular songwriters of the 20th century. Despite his well-deserved reputation as a chronic procrastinator, he finally managed in 1972 to produce a full-length book, written in collaboration with the popular-music scholar James Maher, who served as his amanuensis.

Though published by an academic press, *American Popular Song: The Great Innovators, 1900-1950* was deceptively casual in both tone and approach. Holding forth in a conversational, frankly opinionated style, and writing both as a connoisseur and as an accomplished composer in his own right, Wilder offered his readers a guided tour of the collected works of Harold Arlen, Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, George Gershwin, Jerome Kern, Richard Rodgers, Arthur Schwartz, Vincent Youmans, and a sprinkling of lesser but still important lights. The results were sharply observed, if so personal at times as to border on autobiography:

> In "One for My Baby," marvelous as is the musical setting, I believe the honors must go to the lyric. I've lived this story too many times, in too many towns, with too many long, long roads outside those doors, not to be hooked. Just imagine having the acuity and courage to start a song, as [Johnny] Mercer does, with "It's quarter to three"!

Rarely has so much concentrated

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insight about an art form been packed into so readable a package, and it is therefore only right that, ever since its publication three decades ago, *American Popular Song* has been acknowledged as the foremost work in its field. But certain of the idiosyncrasies that lend the book its charm have also proved, over time, to limit its usefulness. Preeminent among these was Wilder's decision to consider only songs written prior to 1950 (though, inconsistent as always, he included several songs written afterward), despite the fact that many of the composers about whom he wrote had remained active well into the 50's and beyond.

James Maher explained Wilder's logic as follows:

> These men were the most respected songwriters of their time. They had developed what Alec Wilder perceives to have been a professional tradition, that is, a tradition based upon a relatively sophisticated command of music. . . . By 1950 the professional tradition in songwriting was nearing its end.

Whatever the merits of this reasoning, the fact remains that noted songwriters of the 50's and 60's, including Leonard Bernstein, Cy Coleman, Bart Howard, Frank Loesser, and Jule Styne—as well as Stephen Sondheim, most of whose best work was done after 1970—either went undiscusssed in *American Popular Song* or were mentioned only briefly.

BUT, IN retrospect, was Wilder right in his conviction that the "professional tradition" in songwriting had come to an end around 1950? In fact, popular songs in that tradition continued to be written throughout the following half-century, and many of them, such as Johnny Mandel's "The Shadow of Your Smile" (1965, lyrics by Paul Webster), Blossom Dearie's "I'm Shadowing You" (1973, lyrics by Johnny Mercer), Dave Frishberg's "Do You Miss New York?" (1980, lyrics by Frishberg), and Mickey Leonard's "Not Exactly Paris" (1992, lyrics by Russell George), were more than good enough to rank alongside the classic standards.[1]

Nevertheless, Wilder was correct in pointing to 1950 as a watershed moment. Starting in the early 50's, a new musical style, rock-and-roll, began its long march to the dominant position in the popular-music industry that it would occupy until the American common culture began to break up in the 90's. Since then, other styles, in particular hip-hop (or rap) and country, have become widely popular. But not since Stephen Sondheim's "Send in the Clowns" (1973, lyrics by Sondheim) has a professional-tradition song been wholeheartedly embraced by the listening public.

What happened to the professional tradition? Why did it give way to rock? And how significant, taken as a whole, are those professional-tradition songs written between 1950 and the turn of the 21st century? Might they someday serve as the basis for a large-scale revival of that tradition? Or is the idiom in which they were written a dying language, spoken only by stubborn antiquarians who refuse to accept the inevitable?

THE ANSWERS to many of these questions can be found in *Classic American Popular Song: The Second Half-Century, 1950-2000*,[2] a companion volume to *American Popular Song*. In this newly published book, David Jenness and Don Velsey endeavor to supply a working definition of the professional-tradition style, in part by contrasting it with other well known mid-century styles; to identify and comment on the best post-1950 songs of the various composers originally discussed by Wilder in his book; and to establish a canon (my word, not theirs) of younger professional-tradition songwriters, again singling out the best of their work for detailed discussion and analysis.

Though *Classic American Popular Song* lacks the quirky, pungent individuality of Wilder's book (and uses far more technical language), it is full of unabashed enthusiasm for its subject.[3] More important, its two authors are almost entirely successful at doing what they set out to do.

To begin with, they examine numerous first-class songs written by the great songwriters of the past in the later years of their careers, including little-known gems like Harold Arlen's "Cocoanut Sweet" (1957, lyrics by E.Y. Harburg), Vernon Duke's "Roundabout" (1952, lyrics by Ogden Nash), and Jimmy Van Heusen's "Where Did Ev'ryone Go?" (1963, lyrics by Mack David). In addition, they do for Bernstein, Coleman, Howard, Loesser, Styne, Sondheim, and other composers—one of them being Wilder himself—what Wilder did for their predecessors in *American Popular Song*, lucidly characterizing their individual styles and identifying and analyzing the best of their songs.

It helps greatly that the authors of *Classic American Popular Song* have a knack for concise description, as in their astute epitome of the virtues of the lyricist Dorothy Fields: "Part of her merit is that she did not need to write brilliantly in order to write well." A more extended example of this facility is their discussion of Cy Coleman's "I

[1] Of comparable interest was the emergence of a similar tradition in Brazilian songwriting led by Antonio Carlos Jobim, many of whose songs are regularly performed in English-language versions, the best of them translated by the Canadian lyricist Gene Lees.

[2] Routledge, 400 pp., $34.95.

[3] A parenthetical observation by Jenness and Velsey says much about the obvious affection in which they hold American popular song: "How many young or middle-aged American travelers, in the postwar decades, have wandered into a London bar or a restaurant in Rome, or even a park in some third-world city, and heard a Gershwin song being played, and have felt their hearts skip a beat?"

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Walk a Little Faster" (1957, lyrics by Carolyn Leigh):

> The melody line begins with big downward intervals; the lovely confiding bridge, opening with "Can't begin to see my future shine as yet" and then rhyming "sign as yet" and "mine as yet," inverts this with up-intervals. Another fine touch is that the title phrase is always set on a pattering repetition of one tone, with one step for the last syllable: it is a perfect expression of someone taking rapid steps forward.

Readers unfamiliar with later developments in professional-tradition song will find especially illuminating the discussions of younger composers like Dearie, Frishberg, John Bucchino, Stephen Flaherty, and Adam Guettel. After reading the second half of *Classic American Popular Song*, no one can reasonably doubt that far from having petered out in the 50's, the professional tradition remained vitally expressive and compelling long after it had ceased to be "popular" in any ordinary sense of the word.

Yet if this is so, what explains the rise of rock-and-roll? Or, to come at the problem from a different direction, why did so many composers in the baby-boom generation feel the need to write songs in a style radically different from that favored by their parents?

Jenness and Velsey do their best to answer this question. Much to their credit, they do not simply take for granted (as did so many displaced songwriters and performers of Wilder's generation) that rock-and-roll was by definition inferior in musical quality to the popular music that came before it. Nevertheless, their "explanation" is too pat for comfort:

> The trauma of Korea, the intensifying cold war, and the beginning of enforced integration in the society altered everyone's range of concern, and accordingly the public's entertainment preferences and musical needs. With a vast new population of young adults (and, now, teens and preteens) constituting the mass-entertainment audience, it was hardly likely that the typical popular songs would continue to express the sophisticated urban cosmopolitanism, or even the white middle-class cultural patterns, of the Broadway musical of the 1930's.

In fact, this explains nothing. The so-called "sophisticated urban cosmopolitanism" of classic American popular song, after all, had appealed to the poverty-scarred children of the Great Depression, an event surely no less traumatic than the Korean war. Moreover, the musically simplistic rock-and-roll of the 50's and 60's coexisted quite easily with classic pop. As late as 1964, it was still possible for Louis Armstrong to knock the Beatles' "Can't Buy Me Love" off the top of the pop-record charts with his cover version of Jerry Herman's "Hello, Dolly." Not until rock (some of it, anyway) attained a considerable degree of musical sophistication in its own right did it definitively supplant the older style of songwriting as the lingua franca of the baby boomers.

To understand the emergence of rock as an alternative popular-music tradition, it is necessary first to look at the relationship between Broadway and the professional tradition. Theatrical songs are subordinate to the plot of a show, which they serve either by advancing or commenting on it. For this reason, the people who write them must be capable of turning out many different types of songs, and of writing songs appropriate to a wide variety of characters.

That is why the best popular songwriters of the 30's and 40's tended to be *specialists*: trained musicians and literate versifiers who typically wrote either the words or the music for songs meant to be sung by actors in Broadway musicals or Hollywood films. Such songs had to be written down in fully notated form so that the performers could learn them, and they had to be sufficiently stylized, even impersonal, to be convincingly interpreted by persons other than their authors.

The kind of institutional culture necessary to sustain an established style like the professional tradition in American popular song is by definition elaborate and expensive, just as the style itself is too complex to be learned in isolation by anyone other than a genius. In order for it to flourish, then, the Broadway musical had to flourish—and when it ceased to do so, undercut by the growing popularity of network TV, the tradition started to dry up. By the mid-60's, not enough new musicals were being produced to give younger songwriters the opportunity to acquire and hone their professional skills. It soon became clear to such young musicians that Broadway had become an inhospitable place.

At the same time, however, the language of rock-and-roll was by now sufficiently developed to pose a challenge, and more and more gifted songwriters began to embrace it as their primary mode of musical expression. Many of them became "singer-songwriters," for whom the finished musical product was not a written-out song, intended to be sung by an actor in a show, but a self-performed recording.

Relieved of the responsibility to subordinate their songs to a preexisting plot, these singer-songwriters were able to explore a wider range of subject matter than did the composers of classic pop, whose ballads dealt almost exclusively with romantic love and its discontents. Some of them, like the folk-rock balladeers Joni Mitchell and James Taylor, cast their songs in the form of autobiographical, even confessional monologues. Others made use

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of fictional characters whose interests were as diverse as their personalities, portraying, say, a frustrated novelist, as in the Beatles' "Paperback Writer" ("Dear Sir or Madam, will you read my book?/It took me years to write, will you take a look?"), or a psychopathic sniper, as in Steely Dan's "Don't Take Me Alive" ("Agents of the law/Luckless pedestrian/I know you're out there/With rage in your eyes and your megaphones").

Radically different though their musical styles were from that of classic pop, the best of these songwriters aspired to a technical sophistication analogous to that of their predecessors. What they did *not* do was learn how to write plot-based theatrical songs, which is why the "rock musical" has remained a contradiction in terms. In every other way, though, their work was fully professional and merited serious consideration, as Jenness and Velsey are quick to acknowledge:

> These new songs were strikingly communicative, and often of high quality, especially poetic. Almost any young professional working around 1975 or later, we suspect, must have wondered down deep whether writing in any way other than "like that" was now old-fashioned or artificial.

As for those classically inclined songwriters who still wrote for the stage, like Adam Guettel and Michael John LaChiusa, they increasingly tended to approach the older idiom in a different way. Following the example of Stephen Sondheim, they wrote opera-like shows with near-continuous scores whose individual numbers tended not to fall into the closed forms of classic pop and whose lyrics, again like Sondheim's, were so plot-oriented as to make them hard to detach and perform individually.

WHAT, THEN, are the prospects for a revival of the old-style professional songwriting tradition? Without an institutional culture to nurture it, they would seem to be exceedingly slim.

One certainly cannot look for salvation to musical comedy. The undiminished popularity of network TV, coupled with the ever-mounting costs of theatrical production in New York, has brought about a permanent reduction in the number of Broadway musicals in any given season. Unwilling to risk money on anything but the safest of ventures, today's producers are reflexively disinclined to back shows written by unknowns, and would far prefer to invest in the mindless vapidities of a "jukebox musical" like *All Shook Up*, whose "score" consists of songs previously recorded by Elvis Presley.

In the absence of new musicals or something like them, there can be no full-scale revival of the professional tradition, but only a steady trickle of isolated songs of quality written by individual songwriters attracted to the classic style for reasons of their own. If anything, it is more likely that we will see the emergence of rock-and-roll composers who take seriously the challenge of writing plot-based songs. To the extent that the professional tradition survives on Broadway, it will be in the form of such recent post-Sondheim musicals as Adam Guettel's frankly operatic *The Light in the Piazza* or William Finn's *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, none of whose charming songs makes sense outside the theatrical context of the show.

A more hopeful development is the return of classic pop *singing*, exemplified by the commercial success of Diana Krall and John Pizzarelli. The careers of both of these artists were built initially on their engaging interpretations of standards. Interestingly, though, both have lately started to write their own songs, Krall in collaboration with the gifted rock-and-roll singer-songwriter Elvis Costello (who is her husband) and Pizzarelli in collaboration with the Broadway singer Jessica Molaskey (who is his wife).

For all the richness of what has come to be called the Great American Songbook, it stands to reason that talented young artists like these would also want to sing new songs written just for them, even if they have to do the writing themselves. It also stands to reason that such songs will increasingly be apt to combine the discipline of professional-tradition pop with the wide-ranging lyrical perspectives and contemporary sensibility of rock. As the New York-based cabaret singer Mary Foster Conklin has observed:

> I got frustrated with standard cabaret because my perspective didn't really contain a shred of what you'd call old-movie romance. . . . I don't do all-Gershwin shows, or little stories about wanting to come to New York and be an actress. I sing ballads for grownups—ballads about reality, about now.

We are thus no closer to a literal revival of the old-fashioned professional tradition in American popular song than we are to a revival of, say, the three-decker Victorian novel or the silent movie. Those receptive to the possibility of a new kind of professional tradition may well live to see it come about, but those who long for the reappearance of songwriters writing "like they used to" can expect to long in vain.

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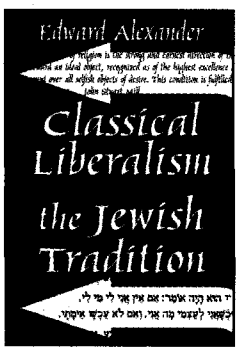

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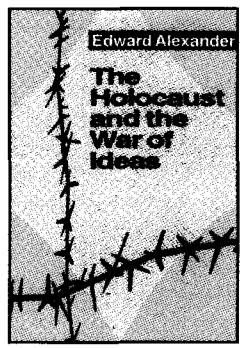

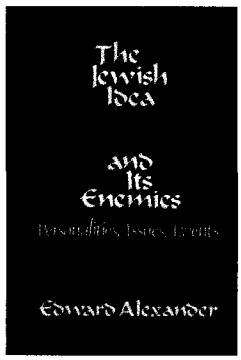

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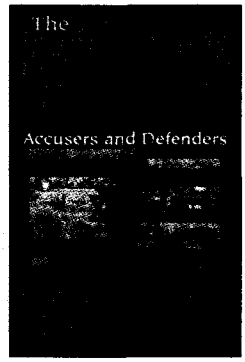

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Books in Review

Profiles in Judaism

Maimonides
by Sherwin B. Nuland
Nextbook/Schocken. 240 pp. $19.95

The Life of David
by Robert Pinsky
Nextbook/Schocken. 224 pp. $19.95

Reviewed by
Jon D. Levenson

"There is no end to the making of books," wrote the biblical sage, an observation to which the subsequent history of the Jews bears eloquent witness. In the classical religious context, books were, and still are, studied in order to absorb their wisdom and to put it into practice. Authors were masters, readers disciples, and both writing and reading were acts of deference to tradition even when they challenged aspects of the reigning consensus.

Modernity has witnessed no diminishment of the seemingly endless stream of books on Jewish figures and ideas, but it has raised a critical question—what is the goal of the whole endeavor?—that continues to elicit a range of answers. One answer is given, at least implicitly, by these two brief biographical studies, the first offerings of a new series called Jewish Encounters.

The series, under the general editorship of Jonathan Rosen, seems to have been modeled on the "Brief Lives" template that has lately become something of a publishing vogue. By design, according to its promotional literature, the series is "idiosyncratic and ambitious," aiming "to create books that are at once edifying, entertaining, and wonderfully illuminating." Its authors are not professional scholars, or at least not professional scholars of the subjects on which they write, and the reader is thus spared the onslaught of footnotes and tedious surveys of previous scholarship under which many a worthy topic lies buried.

This is, without a doubt, a highly laudable and creative initiative in contemporary Jewish bookmaking. The only question is whether the brief and informal format allows justice to be done to the subjects, and gives a sense of their importance within the Jewish tradition.

Sherwin B. Nuland is a prize-winning author and a physician who teaches surgery, bioethics, and the history of medicine at Yale. Maimonides (1138-1204), the subject of his exceptionally well-written, engaging, and concise biography, was also a physician and a scholar of medicine, as well as an authority on Jewish law, a philosopher and theologian, and a communal leader of immeasurable influence and enduring repute. Protesting his own lack of expertise in the area of medieval Judaism, Nuland tells us he was assured by his editor that "he did not want a scholar steeped in the complexities of his subject's philosophy; he wanted a writer, who might seek out the essence of the man and tell the story of his lifelong journey toward understanding."

As one should expect, Nuland gives more attention proportion-

Jon D. Levenson *is the Albert A. List professor of Jewish studies at Harvard and the author of* Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence *(Princeton) and* The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity *(Yale).*

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ately to Maimonides' medical vocation and writings than most scholars have done, but he is careful to avoid what he calls "presentism—seeing the events of the past through the prism of today's values and knowledge." In particular, he takes pains to note the vast difference between medieval and modern medicine. In the Middle Ages, medicine was not founded on experimentation and did not prize innovation highly. Rather, it sought fidelity to ancient authorities, especially Galen. This was generally true of Maimonides as well. If he nevertheless stood out, according to Nuland, it was because he studied the ancients directly (though in Arabic translation) and was not afraid to challenge Galen if he thought a rival authority had a better idea.

But what is most impressive about Maimonides the physician, writes Nuland, is not the content of his medical theory but the ethical passion and psychological and spiritual insight with which he practiced his profession. Commenting on a famous letter in which Maimonides discusses the exhausting demands of his medical practice, the biographer lyrically fuses his own values with those of his subject:

> Medicine is not a profession for the summer soldier or the sunshine patriot. It is a calling and, as such, transcends the mere requirements of a career. It does not put itself to sleep for the night nor does it wander off into the realms of pleasure, so long as there is someone sick who has a need that can be fulfilled in no other way than by this particular doctor or a designated colleague. This is the essence not only of the social contract that the profession—the calling—has with humankind in general, but the moral contract that every physician worthy of the name has with himself or herself.

To HIS credit, Nuland illuminates not only Maimonides the physician but also Maimonides the legal authority, philosopher, and communal leader. These latter roles do not, to be sure, elicit the same degree of ardor in him, and not only because he lacks expertise in Jewish law or in the conceptual problems raised, for example, by the interaction of Scripture and philosophy (a deep concern of Maimonides). The real reason is that whereas the humane physician is a familiar ideal in modern secular society, the roles for which Maimonides is most remembered in Jewish tradition—and in which he left his enduring mark—are thoroughly alien to modern society and thus commensurately difficult to convey in a brief biography.

Given the magnitude of the challenge, one must judge Nuland's interaction with Judaism to be highly productive and helpful. His sense of the theological issues at stake is also good, even if his brief discussion of them will inevitably invite disagreement from scholars of Maimonides' complex and endlessly debated thought. Finally, Nuland gives us (with due allowance for the constraints of space and for occasional errors of fact) a good evocation of Jewish life under medieval Islam, both in its moments of glorious cultural efflorescence and in its moments of degradation at the hands of the Muslim majority; in this connection, he writes both about the humanity and generosity of Saladin (under whose rule Maimonides served in Egypt) and about the savage persecution of Maimonides and other Spanish and North African Jews by Muslim fanatics. In sum, one gains here a good sense not only of the man but of the civilization in which he lived and wrote.

IF SHERWIN NULAND is a physician writing about a physician, Robert Pinsky is a poet writing about a poet. The author of a number of well-received books of poetry and criticism, including a highly regarded translation of *The Divine Comedy*, Pinsky is also a former poet laureate of the United States. It thus seems fitting enough that he should have been commissioned to write about the man to whom is ascribed approximately half of the biblical book of Psalms. But Pinsky sees King David as more than simply the "sweet singer of Israel," or as the exemplar of piety that is suggested by the Psalms attributed to his authorship. We should understand David's life, Pinsky tells us, as "a story of flawed fathers, of unexpectedly powerful women, and of defiant sons." It is also, he makes clear, a story of political and sexual intrigue, of betrayal and war, of love and brutality, of tragedy and exaltation.

Given the paucity of data about King David, with almost all of the information coming from the biblical books of Samuel and Kings, Pinsky has wisely resisted the temptation to cast his own "Jewish encounter" as a biography. Instead, he offers observations on key biblical narratives, considered in sequence. These observations are sometimes arresting and insightful, always accessible, and never bogged down in either traditional commentary or modern historical criticism. Unfortunately, however, Pinsky's failure adequately to engage the history either of the biblical text or of post-biblical tradition exacts a cost.

The discussion of David's celebrated confrontation with the Philistine hero Goliath is a case in point. The two men, Pinsky informs us, were already "familiar to one another and even, it has been proposed, relatives." But the Bible gives no indication of any previous acquaintance or familial relationship. Pinsky seems, rather, to be relying here on a remark of a talmudic rabbi, living well over a millennium after David, who disparaged Goliath's birth by associating him with Orpah, the sister-in-law of David's great-grandmother, Ruth the Moabite. In truth, even the claim that David was descended from Ruth is less than altogether secure, appearing only in the book of Ruth and nowhere in

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Samuel or Kings. None of this, however, prevents Pinsky from taking the rabbi's remark as illuminating the plain sense of David's life, from asserting that "even here with his legendary enemy, the story of David involves the mysteries of how a person belongs or does not belong with another, or with a family or a tribe or a people," or from entitling the whole chapter "Cousin Goliath."

This points to a larger issue, namely, the cultural framework in which King David is properly to be set. On the one hand, as we have just seen, Pinsky does draw on occasion from the ongoing Jewish tradition. On the other hand, he weaves his observations around biblical passages selected exclusively and uncritically from the King James Version (1611), because he regards this "as the greatest translation into English ever, of anything" and one that "echoes through memorable writing in our tongue, with endless variety." But whatever the glories of the King James Version, it is surely neither the most accurate English translation of the Hebrew Bible available today nor the one that best captures the Hebraic character of the text.

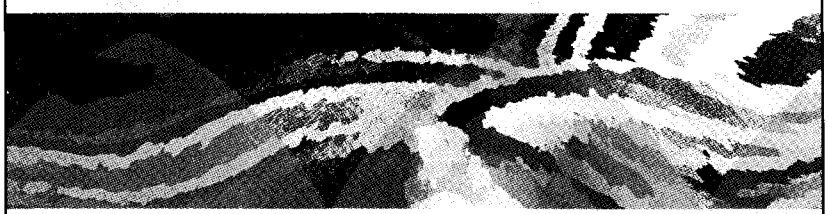
Regrettably, Pinsky's finely honed literary sensibilities, the source of more than a few valuable remarks in this book, seem also to be the source of his distaste for much of the role David plays in Jewish tradition. David the passionate lover, David the savvy if brutal politician, David the flawed father—these fascinate Pinsky and elicit his best comments. But David the paradigm of religious devotion, David the recipient of the irrevocable promise of kingship on which the Jewish messianic hope rests—to these Pinsky devotes inadequate and at time deprecatory attention.

Consider his treatment of the deathbed charge the king delivers to his son and successor Solomon. Here Pinsky becomes a historian of the text, writing that David's "deeply secular, power-conscious, nearly thuggish last instructions are given comical emphasis by an interpolation by the much later, pious author-editor called 'the Deuteronomist'—an anachronistic command to study and obey Deuteronomy."

In general, Pinsky's account of the compositional history of the David narratives is woefully simplistic. Here, though, most critical scholars would agree with him that the "interpolation" in question is the contribution of a relatively late source heavily influenced by Deuteronomy.* Many would also agree that the "Torah of Moses" to which the verse refers was originally a version of the work that became

* The verse in question reads: "Keep the charge of the LORD your God, walking in His ways, observing His decrees, His commandments, His laws, and His covenant stipulations, as they are written in the Torah of Moses."

Talking with Christians



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the fifth and final book of the Pentateuch or Five Books of Moses. But in the context of the Hebrew Bible now in our hands, and all the more so in the context of post-biblical Jewish tradition, the term cannot but refer to the whole Torah.

This is a fact with consequences. To Pinsky, David's deathbed devotion serves a function that is merely "comical," highlighting a set of "nearly thuggish" instructions that clearly strike him as more interesting and even more serious than a pious appeal to the Torah. Missing here is any apprehension of the high import, for centuries of Jewish readers, of the statement that King David, who for most of his life gave scant impression of being devoted to the practice and study of the Torah of Moses, should at the very end have urged these central Jewish activities on his son. And yet this is the David who reverberates throughout Jewish tradition.

FOR ALL their differences in subject and tone, these little books draw attention, each in its own way, to the larger issue that I raised at the beginning—how best to convey Jewish ideas or the lives of central Jewish figures to a contemporary readership. Should biographies present their subjects as figures worthy of emulation, and ought the study of Jewish ideas encourage acceptance of those ideas and counteract the modern abandonment of religious observance and belief? Should the goal instead be to present a neutral, objective history, in which figures, even figures very beloved to the tradition, are rendered warts and all and made to face the bar of hard-headed secular thinking? What is the minimal standard of competence to be demanded of authors? Even more fundamentally, how does one address a readership that is no doubt highly literate in many areas of inquiry but lacks a firsthand knowledge of traditional sources, practices, and institutions?

As it happens, biography is not a classical Jewish genre—a fact that is itself indicative of an important feature of the Jewish tradition. This is primarily the tradition of a people, a natural family extended over the generations, and not of disconnected individuals whose story demands to be told because of the intrinsic interest of their particular personal experience. And that is related in turn to a crucial feature of Jewish literature, at least in its pre-modern modes—namely, its intensely intertextual character, its deference to precedent, and its tendency to grow by accretion and interpretation, by the expansion of previous texts and the commentary on them, whether those texts be narratives about King David or the works of a great medieval legal authority and philosopher like Maimonides.

Biographies, even very good ones, are not well positioned to cap-

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ture these peculiar features of Jewish tradition, although I would argue that the attempt should nevertheless be made and that the rewards, as Sherwin Nuland's book suggests, can be substantial. Which is reason enough to applaud both of these first efforts in a promising enterprise, and to look forward to future volumes as they appear.

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Reviewed by
Daniel Johnson

In some respects, Tony Judt ought to be the right man for the job of writing a history of Europe since 1945. His own life mirrors precisely the postwar period: born in 1948, he grew up in 1950's London, a world of "high-collared, Edwardian-era reformism" from which he retrospectively recoils, though in fact no generation in modern times enjoyed greater security or prosperity. After the events of Paris 1968, he was drawn into the intoxicating milieu of the French Left, which briefly flickered back into life during the Mitterrand era in the 1980's. *Past Imperfect* (1992), his study of French intellectuals from 1944 to 1956, is still the best account of their doomed love affair with Communism. Despite his Francophilia, Judt ultimately found the academic opportunities created by American capitalism irresistible, abandoning Oxford and Cambridge for Berkeley and New York University. At the latter, he heads the Remarque Institute for the study of Europe while enjoying an affluence and an influence of which European academics can only dream.

Along with other luminaries of the mid-Atlantic liberal intelligentsia, Judt has also emerged as a prominent critic of the Bush administration and its neoconservative foreign policies. Two years ago, in the pages of the *New York Review of Books*, he turned his attention to Israel, claiming that progress toward peace with the Arabs had been wrecked by Israel's "fascist" ruling class, whose vanguard of settlers would fight to the death rather than withdraw. Like the late Edward Said, with whom he collaborated, Judt regards Israel as an "anachronism," and predicted in 2003 that unless it abandoned its identity as a Jewish state it would cease to be a democracy "within half a decade."

Postwar is Judt's most ambitious book to date, a monumental work of synthesis in which he demonstrates considerable mastery of this most complex of continents. A thousand pages on Europe since 1945 may seem dauntingly prolix, but the cumulative effect can be entertaining, for Judt is usually provocative and often caustic in his judgments. The art form that he knows best is the film, and his technique is decidedly cinematic, with the focus constantly shifting from one theme or region to another within a loosely chronological framework. The reader is carried along by the sweep of the narrative and the ubiquitous presence of an author who confidently questions everyone's assumptions but his own.

The book tells two complementary stories: the rise of the Western half of the continent in the years after 1945, paralleled by the decline and fall and, after 1989, the rise again of the East. In Judt's ingenious framework, the cold-war years are

Daniel Johnson, *formerly a senior editor and columnist for the London* Times *and* Daily Telegraph, *is now a columnist for the* New York Sun.

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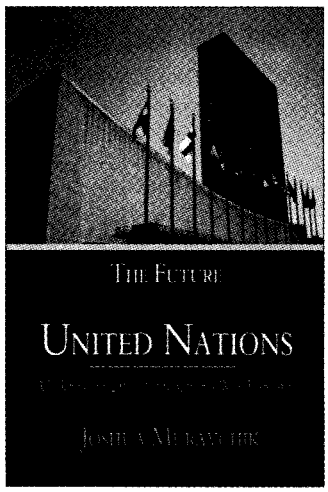

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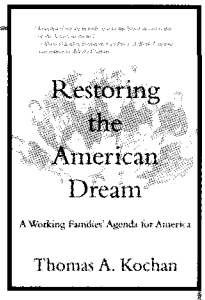

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thus seen as but the final phase of an all-European civil war that, beginning in 1914, destroyed one continental civilization but created the conditions in which a new one could finally emerge. In the nations of the Soviet bloc, that resurrection was long postponed; but as soon as the Berlin Wall fell, history picked up again where it had left off four decades before.

Along the way, Judt shows in great detail how the lives of most ordinary Europeans have changed for the better over the past 60 years. To be sure, he recognizes the price of this prosperity—how, for instance, the "New Brutalist" architecture of the 50's and 60's created pandemonium in inner cities and sprawling suburbs, especially when combined with social engineering, immigration, and multiculturalism. But the core of his argument is upbeat: today, six decades after Hitler's war, Europe is at last moving on.

"The new Europe, bound together by the signs and symbols of its terrible past, is a remarkable accomplishment," writes Judt. From that "terrible past," today's Europe—by which Judt mostly means the federal superstate represented by the European Union, together with its cadre of intellectual supporters—has learned not to impose its politics or culture on the rest of the world; it has learned to beware of any "overarching ideological project" of Left or Right; it has learned to be proud of its own "European model," over and against that of the United States; and it has learned how to re-create the "multicultural" society that the Nazis and Communists destroyed.

A REMARKABLE accomplishment, indeed—if true. But how reliable is Judt? That he can be sloppy in small matters is certain. Thus, a prominent Czech dissident, Ludek Pachman, is described here as a Pole, while Ludwig Erhard, the architect of the German "economic miracle," is made the leader of a party to which he never even belonged. More surprising are the gaps in Judt's knowledge of European culture. Telling us that the idea for this book came to him in 1989 in Vienna, he refers incorrectly to the city's orchestra, one of the world's greatest, as the "Viennese Philharmonic." Elsewhere, he manhandles the names of Bertolt Brecht and Günter Grass, and lumps Graham Greene together with Evelyn Waugh as "dyspeptic Catholic traditionalists," a juxtaposition that would have amused both writers.

Still, these are minor blemishes. More serious issues arise from Judt's polemical purposes in writing this book. In *Paradise Lost*, Milton famously attempted to justify the ways of God to men. In *Postwar*, Judt has attempted to justify the ways of Europe to America. A major theme of his narrative is what he sees as the salutary emancipation of Europe from the tutelage of the United States, and a major aim of his interpretation of Europe's recent past is to counteract the disenchantment of his American contemporaries with Europe's present. Let us take these in order.

Judt acknowledges that the American contribution to the economic recovery and defense of postwar Europe was indispensable. But, according to him, the Americanization of Europe in the 1940's and 50's has been greatly exaggerated, and in any case Europe's "American moment" lies in the past, not the future. The appeal of America to the new democracies of Eastern Europe he sees as a passing flirtation.

There is something faintly comical in this thesis of a growing and healthy trans-Atlantic divergence. Performing his exalted role from a university chair in Manhattan, Judt is an apologist for a European model he prefers to experience vicariously. As for the kind of transoceanic life he himself enjoys, it is now led by millions of Europeans and Americans alike.

What is undeniable, however, is that Europe has witnessed the rise

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of an increasingly strident anti-Americanism. This phenomenon has struck many as a dangerous, even pathological phenomenon, a mark of European decadence.

Not Judt, though: he welcomes its spread from intellectual circles a half-century ago into popular culture today as a manifestation of Europe's political maturity. He notes with approval the comment by Germany's Konrad Adenauer to Guy Mollet, the French prime minister, after the latter's humiliation by President Eisenhower at Suez in the mid-1950's: "Europe will be your revenge." Presumably that revenge, embodied first in the European Common Market and ultimately in the EU, is now at hand.

At the dawn of the new millennium, Judt writes approvingly, "Europe was—or should strive to be—everything that America wasn't." He does not appear to see anything wrong with this negative definition of European identity, though one wonders where to find the maturity in it: the assertion of European "values" as merely the antithesis of American ones implies that the relationship remains unequal and even parasitical. But here is also where Judt's second aim—to wean Americans of their suspicions about Europe—runs afoul of his cultural preferences and skews his historical judgment.

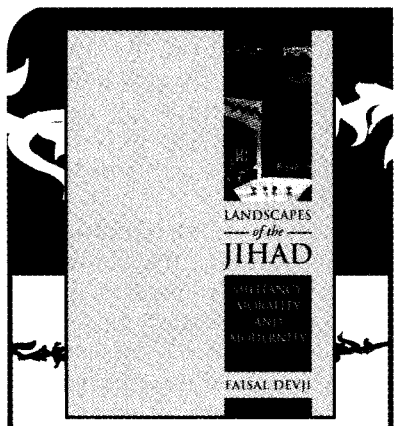
The problem becomes most salient in his account of the end of the cold war. Ronald Reagan's role is downplayed, and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of Great Britain, who inspired and encouraged Reagan, is written out of the script altogether. (Judt is at least as antipathetic toward his native as toward his adoptive homeland, especially when led by a popular figure.) Far from having brought about the collapse of Communism, the Americans are depicted as spectators, and uncomprehending ones at that.

One can perhaps see why Judt finds it necessary to rewrite history in this way. For if *Postwar* has a hero, it is Mikhail Gorbachev, praised above all as a "European statesman" who accomplished Russia's exit from an unsustainable empire largely without bloodshed. In this scheme, not only the Americans and the British but the East Europeans themselves must be denied credit for their liberation.

Sure enough, Judt sees nothing decisive about the rise of Solidarity in Poland; it was merely the last of many impotent gestures against Soviet rule. Nor does the charisma of Pope John Paul II, in many ways the outstanding European figure of the late 20th century, impress him in the least. He does not seriously entertain the notion that John Paul II helped to make 1989 possible by demonstrating the hollowness of Communism, or, for that matter, that the Polish Pope was successful in bringing about reconciliation between Catholics and Jews.

These and other judgments are so distant from any rational reading of events that one is finally driven to ask what lies behind them. It is, in brief, Judt's hatred of the nation-state, whether in its European, its American, or its Israeli form. In Europe, he sees the nation-state not as the basic unit of freedom, democracy, and the rule of law but rather as an engine of ethnic and cultural chauvinism. The more united it has claimed to be, the less tolerant its treatment of minorities; and when it comes to nations, small is emphatically not beautiful. Only under the constraints of a larger political entity—the Habsburg empire, the Soviet bloc, Tito's Yugoslavia, the European Union—can the repressive tendencies of nation-states be held in check.

Hence Judt's eulogizing of the EU as the solution to the problems that tore Europe apart between 1914 and 1989. But is it true that nationalism was the sole or even the major cause of those problems? Even the Nazis claimed to be fight-



Landscapes of the Jihad

Militancy, Morality, Modernity

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—Olivier Roy,
author of *Globalised Islam: The Search for a New Ummah*

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ing for a united Europe against Asiatic barbarism, and the carnage wrought by the supranational ideologies in whose names the century's global conflicts were fought outstripped by far the damage done by nationalism.

In fact, if the 20th century proves anything, it is that the nation-state is a more reliable guardian of liberty than is continental empire. The histories of Europe's individual nation-states render them incomparably more heterogeneous—more "diverse," in the cant word—than even the United States of America. Today, it is the European Union rather than its constituent states that has a crisis of legitimacy.

Nor is it in the least clear that, if Europeans have learned from their recent history, they have all learned the same lessons, or that Judt's lessons are the right ones. If Poles and Ukrainians, or Balts and Georgians, appear paranoid to him, that may be because Russia is again demanding a free hand within its sphere of influence, which his "Europe" seems only too happy to concede. Although Judt takes Donald Rumsfeld to task for inciting "New" against "Old" Europe, not only was Rumsfeld stating the obvious but his rhetoric was far less divisive than that of Jacques Chirac, who tried to silence the new, pro-American members of the EU altogether. The assumption that the grand project of "ever-closer union" still enjoys popular consent is increasingly questionable, as the rejection of the European constitution by the French and Dutch electorates indicates.

JUDT WRITES that "the dictators"—that is, Stalin and Hitler—"blasted flat the demographic heath" of Europe, which thereafter consisted of "hermetic national enclaves" until rescued from their parochialism by the ministrations of the EU. In the new, multicultural Europe, such ethnically homogenous states are now blessedly obsolete, and in his opinion they should be retired elsewhere, too.

That is where Israel comes in. Curiously, Judt scarcely mentions anti-Zionism in this book, though it has become the lowest common denominator of continental European politics, or of what he is glad to call "Europe as a way of life." Once again there is a kind of logic to this: the Jewish people, who have survived millennia of persecution to create and defend a democratic nation-state against overwhelming odds, challenge everything Europe is taken by Judt to represent. No wonder, then, that an author who waxes eloquent over the enduring scars of the Holocaust should glide silently over the unrelenting hostility toward Israel among the European elites, a hostility that has extended to funding Palestinian organizations dedicated to Israel's destruction. But Judt gives the game away when he accuses Israel of damaging the interests of Jews like himself in the Diaspora, thus implicitly conceding that anti-Zionism may, after all, mutate into anti-Semitism.

Is it one of the lessons that Europe is supposed to have learned from its history that the Jews cannot be trusted with their own state, even when that state embodies the best European traditions of democracy and the rule of law? For many Europeans, Israel is indeed an unwelcome revenant from the continent's gruesome past, complicating their relationship with Islam and with their sense of themselves. For Judt, Israel is a no less welcome revenant, complicating his relationship with Europe. One might be more impressed by his paean to Europe's recovered humanity if its politicians, and its intellectuals, treated living Jews with as much respect as dead ones.

Emotional Correctness

One Nation Under Therapy: How the Helping Culture Is Eroding Self-Reliance

by Christina Hoff Sommers and Sally Satel

St. Martin's Press. 310 pp. $23.95

Reviewed by
Bruce S. Thornton

IN THE wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 9,000 "grief counselors" descended on New York City. Their mission was to provide the treatment and psychological guidance considered necessary to help both survivors and families of victims in coping with their trauma. So ubiquitous has this sort of intervention become after every disaster in America that we no longer stop to think about it. Yet, according to Christina Hoff Sommers and Sally Satel in *One Nation Under Therapy*, it is just one manifestation of a much larger and in their view highly detrimental set of assumptions about how to deal with the vicissitudes of life—assumptions that now permeate many of our public institutions.

Christina Hoff Sommers is the author of *Who Stole Feminism* (1994) and *The War Against Boys* (2000), two trenchant analyses of the baleful impact of extreme feminist theory on the education of both boys and girls. Sally Satel, like Sommers a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, is a practicing psychiatrist and the author of *PC MD* (2002), an account of how "identity politics," in the form of theories about race, gender, and poverty, has compromised the practice of medicine. The book they have now co-authored is a biting exposé of "therapism"—not the same thing as therapy per se, which can

BRUCE S. THORNTON *is a professor of classics at California State University at Fresno and the author of, among other books,* Greek Ways: How the Greeks Created Western Civilization.

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often provide real benefits, but a damaging mindset that, in their words, "pathologizes normal human emotion, promoting the illusion that we are very fragile beings and urging grand emotional displays as the prescription for coping."

One Nation Under Therapy is organized around specific practices that have been promoted by the mental-health establishment and are now widely institutionalized. In many schools, for instance, certain games, including dodge ball and tag, have been eliminated, on the grounds that they inflict an esteem-killing competitiveness and sense of exclusion on the "fragile child"—a helpless creature of the therapists' imagination who wilts at the slightest breath of criticism, judgment, or failure. Despite the fact that (as the authors put it) "the prevalence of depression among children and adolescents has not significantly changed in the past 30 years," and that no scientific evidence links elevated self-esteem to success or happiness, a belief in children's psychic vulnerability has become enshrined in school programs and curricula.

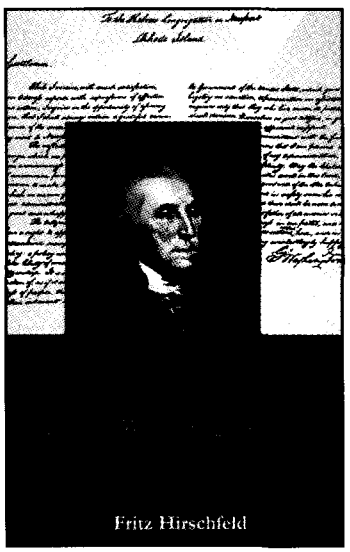
Sommers and Satel turn next to the so-called "human-potential movement," a mid-20th-century offspring of the psychologists Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers and the parent, in turn, of the self-esteem craze. This school of thought posits the existence inside each of us of an ideal self, "buried under a lot of wreckage put there by a judgmental, emotionally withholding, unforgiving, and oppressive society."

In this reading, persons we might once have considered sinners or wrongdoers are instead reconceived as the victims of malign social forces, and entitled as such to our empathy and compassion and, frequently, our tax dollars. They can be restored to health only through the ministrations of professionals who have been trained to guide them on the path of personal fulfillment "through a regimen of self-preoccupation, self-expression, and psychic release." From this medicalizing of moral failure, write Sommers and Satel, have come such latter-day spectacles as the "treatment" accorded to some pedophiliac Catholic priests who, once "cured" of their "sickness," were released to prey again on children in their parishes.

Still another expression of therapism is the doctrine of "emotional correctness." According to its dictates, people who have suffered a tragedy are virtually required to dwell publicly on what they have undergone lest they be considered humanly inadequate. The idea here is that sudden or deep loss can leave a hidden dysfunction in the psyche, often in the form of "post-traumatic stress disorder" (PTSD)—a term invented by antiwar activists in the late 1960's to pathologize Vietnam veterans, now extended into an all-purpose "archetype for the experience of adversity in our culture."

For Sommers and Satel, PTSD, like emotional correctness, "confuse[s] pathos with pathology." Worse, it ignores "how frequently survivors find sustaining meaning in heartbreak and how often they persevere nobly" in the face of it, especially if they have the support of family, friends, or religious faith. By contrast, "when people are distraught, ruminating about their pain may only intensify the pain."

This brings us back to 9/11 and its aftermath. As it turned out, the 9,000 counselors and therapists who gathered in New York ended up with very little to do. Most people, drawing on their own resources of resilience and inner strength, were quite able to deal with that life-shattering disaster. Indeed, as Sommers and Satel conclude, many victims of trauma "can point to ways they have *benefited* [emphasis added] from their struggle to cope" with catastrophe. What they need most from the helping arms of society is a reduction in the "disorder, uncertainty, and economic devastation" that accompany such events. Mental-health professionals unable to strike "a balance between offering [their]



George Washington and the Jews
Fritz Hirschfeld

President George Washington was the first head of a modern nation to openly acknowledge the Jews as full-fledged citizens of the land in which they chose to settle. Hirschfeld's book explores the background and circumstances that led to the milestone relationship between Washington and the Jews. His personal philosophy of religious tolerance can be summed up in his 1790 address to the Hebrew Congregation of Newport, Rhode Island, where he stated "May the Children of the Stock of Abraham, who dwell in this land, continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other inhabitants . . . ."

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services and promoting them too eagerly" too often constitute only another source of disorder, and a hindrance to healing.

One Nation Under Therapy is a salutary book, one that not only provides convincing evidence of the harm done by therapism but also reminds us of the appropriateness—indeed, the necessity—of indignation and censoriousness in the face of destructive behavior. Beyond this, it seeks to recover the connection between such old-fashioned virtues and the preservation of a democratic culture founded on the ideals of autonomy and freedom. As Sommers and Satel rightly point out, "Only a society that treats its members as ethically responsible and personally accountable can achieve and sustain a democratic civil order." The American creed, in particular, emphasizes "self-reliance, stoicism, courage in the face of adversity, and the valorization of excellence." Therapism, unfortunately, "is at odds with them all."

If I have a reservation about the authors' argument, it has to do with their insistence on confining themselves to the realm of social science and social psychology. Given their perspective, this was perhaps unavoidable, but it leaves open the question of whether there is such a thing as a "science" of human identity and behavior in the first place. Sommers and Satel answer one deeply flawed conception of human well-being with another that is presumably more accurate and assuredly more mature. But, from the scientific point of view, psychological states are in general notoriously difficult to define, measure, and assess, and most efforts to do so are inevitably compromised by the subjectivity and fuzziness of terms like "happy," "anxious," and so forth. In the end one wonders whether we might not be better served simply by relying on our common moral sense, aided by the millennial teachings of literature and religion.

Within its own social-scientific framework, however, *One Nation Under Therapy* does an impressive job of documenting the shaky assumptions, bad science, and simplistic nostrums of therapism. It also offers powerful empirical reasons for resisting an ideology whose proponents seem bent on turning us not into free and responsible adults but into children dependent on their advice and treatment, if not subject to their control.

Mail Call

Soldiering for Freedom: A GI's Account of World War II

by Herman J. Obermayer

Texas A&M. 324 pp. $32.95

Reviewed by
Jonathan R. Cohen

COINCIDING WITH the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II, a clutch of new books has focused on the day-to-day life of American soldiers, mostly as conveyed in letters home to families and loved ones. A number of these books have the additional feature of being organized around the theme of Jewish identity, while others inevitably raise the issue of the Jewish fate in the great battle against Nazism.

Two problems immediately arise from this sort of exercise. The first has to do with the inherent value of personal correspondence as history. War letters tend to be written not in the heat of battle but during downtime, as armies rest or prepare to fight or to move on. As devices for warding off boredom and contending with loneliness, they are tedious almost by their very nature, filled with the dry particulars of barracks life—packages that have arrived or failed to arrive, gripes about the weather, the food, the privileges unfairly afforded to officers, and so on.

Rare are the letters, or the books made from them, that actually illuminate larger events or add meaningfully to our understanding of those events. This is certainly the lesson one takes away from one of the most ambitious recent efforts, *Behind the Lines: Powerful and Revealing American and Foreign War Letters.** Drawn from highly disparate conflicts ranging from the Revolutionary war to Iraq, this collection not only lacks a unifying theme but offers very few "powerful and revealing" sentiments, unless the sentiment that war is hell qualifies as one.

A second problem bedevils World War II letters by American Jewish soldiers in particular, or at least those chosen with an eye for what they can tell us about issues of "identity" (hardly a common obsession in those days). Wrestling on paper with one's Jewishness has its poignancy, no doubt, but in context it can also seem rather small beer against the vast scale of the enterprise in which these soldiers are involved and the human stakes that hinge on its outcome.

A useful example here is *GI Jews: How World War II Changed a Generation.* Deborah Dash Moore,† the author, a professor of religion at Vassar, has drawn on a selection of letters, monographs, interviews, and other material in order to tell the individual tales of some fifteen Jewish GI's hailing mostly from New York City. In her pages we encounter the Jewish loner whose sense of isolation drives him to join a Christian-fellowship group; the assimilated Jew who during a tour of duty in India, brought face to face with the local Jewish community, discovers his own hitherto unsus-

JONATHAN R. COHEN *has published essays and reviews in the* Baltimore Sun, *the* Forward, *the* New York Sun, *and the* Philadelphia Inquirer.

* Edited by Andrew Carroll, Scribner, 501 pp., $30.00

† Belknap, 352 pp., $25.95.

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pected ethnic pride; the Orthodox student from Yeshiva University forced to confront simultaneously the prejudice of Catholic mates and the hostility of a Reform chaplain; and so forth. Unfortunately, despite certain vivid episodes, Moore's hodgepodge of "great moments in Jewish consciousness" adds up to a rather less than instructive whole.

Can one do better by concentrating on a single man's experience? That depends on the man. *The GI's Rabbi: World War II Letters of David Max Eichhorn** is rich in promise but short on delivery. If the details recorded in a grunt's letters home generally tend to the pedestrian, the clergyman reaching for large themes and deep insights tends regularly to the grandiloquent. "Heavy is the responsibility," Rabbi Eichhorn intones to the congregation of Temple Israel in Tallahassee, Florida on Rosh Hashanah 1940, "which devolves upon him who seeks to bring his people a message in such a time."

To be fair, there is one experience—the encounter with the Nazi death camps and their survivors—that can transform the most banal letter-writer, Jewish or non-Jewish, into a true witness, forcing him to put into words what he can barely comprehend. From *Behind the Lines*, complete with original typos, here is a letter home from Sergeant Arthur I. Wallace of Dayton, Ohio, describing the liberation of the Dachau concentration camp by American forces in the spring of 1945. Using a captured SS typewriter whose keys he cannot quite manage, Wallace vividly conveys his feelings of unalloyed astonishment and revulsion:

> The real xxxx horror greeted us in the compound and the adjacent railroad tracks.Bodieswere stacked, perhaps piled would be a better word, like so much coal.... Seeing those poor starved people of all nationalities was bad enough but here was something one read about it books or a bad dream. Some of the furnaceswere still under fire. others with doors open where in full view were more bodies actually stuffed in like paper.... There were ten huge furnaces in this building for the soul purpose of burning the bodies....The box cards held more bodies loaded to top. There must have beenten or twelve cars. We still cant figure out the boxcar idea but when yous ee all this reaseoning departs and you run for the nearest corner to vomit.

As it happens, Rabbi Eichhorn was also at Dachau soon after liberation, where he attempted to hold a camp-

* Edited by Greg Palmer & Mark S. Zaid, Kansas, 260 pp., $29.95.

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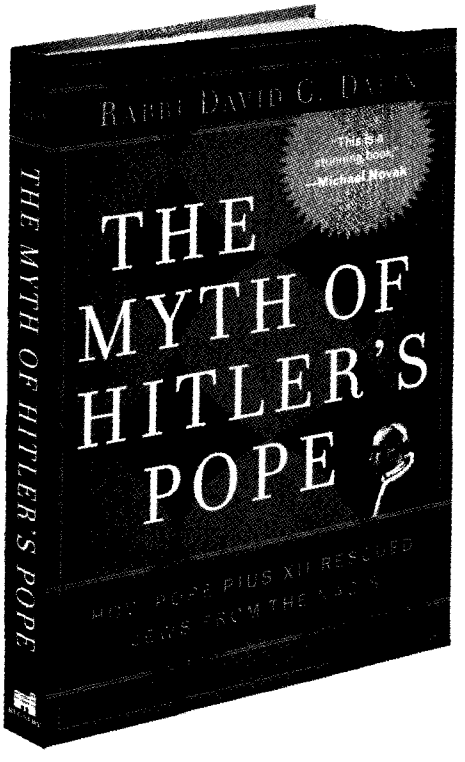
wide Sabbath service for the survivors under the auspices of the International Prisoners' Committee. The ceremony was to include a delegation from every national group represented in the camp, "as an indication of . . . brotherly sympathy for the Jewish people." On arriving at the main square, however, Rabbi Eichhorn discovered to his amazement that no preparations had been made. According to the committee's representative, the non-Jewish Polish inmates had threatened that "if a Jewish service were held in the square, they would break it up by force." The murderous European hatred of Jews, we see once again from these words, was a passion capable of outrunning even the Nazi Holocaust.

HERMAN J. OBERMAYER, now a retired newspaper executive in Washington (and a member of this magazine's Publication Committee), did not see battle, and was not present at the liberation of the death camps. Like other recent offerings, *Soldiering for Freedom*, a collection of letters written to his family while serving in the Army from 1943 to 1946, has plenty to say about tedium in the barracks and other discomforts. Nevertheless, it stands out not only for its acute observations about everyday life in the Army but for its insights into world-historical events going on in the background.

Drafted at the end of his freshman year at Dartmouth, Obermayer was billeted in Williamsburg, Virginia, where he was trained to become an Army engineer. Eventually he arrived in France, placed deep behind Allied lines as a medic and a roustabout on a gasoline pipeline. By the time of his arrival, in January 1945, the war was nearly over, but he stayed in Europe long enough to wangle a hard-to-get gallery pass to the postwar Nuremberg trials; there he witnessed Hitler's designated successor Hermann Goering in the dock and befriended John Woods, the Army's professional hangman, at whose hand those convicted at Nuremberg would meet their deaths (but whom Goering would cheat by suicide).

Particularly noteworthy are Obermayer's reflections on his time in France, and on relations between the French and the Americans. While few today still cling to the myth that most or even a majority of French citizens supported the resistance, many believe that France was an American ally much like Britain and Russia. In fact, while the French may have cheered the arrival of Allied troops in their streets, many among them, particularly the hundreds of thousands who had avidly collaborated with the Nazis and now feared retribution, were hardly rooting for an Allied victory.

For their part, American GI's, often with reason, viewed the French



THE MYTH OF HITLER'S POPE

Sixty years after the Holocaust, with anti-Semitism virulent among Islamic fundamentalists and growing rapidly among secular Europeans, the liberal media in the West has tried to blame Pope Pius XII (and even the Catholic Church as a whole) for anti-Semitism.

Was Pope Pius XII secretly in league with Adolf Hitler? No, says Rabbi David G. Dalin, author of the revealing new book *The Myth of Hitler's Pope*. In fact, as Pope Pius XII worked to save Jews from the Nazis, the grand mufti of Jerusalem, Hajj Amin al-Husseini, became Hitler's staunch ally and a promoter of the Holocaust, with a legacy that feeds radical Islam today.

If you want the truth about Pope Pius XII, about the Catholic Church, the Jews, and the Holocaust, and about how the fallacy of "Hitler's pope" plays into the culture wars of our own time—and how the fact of Hitler's mufti is a vital source of radical Islam today—you must begin here.

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as potential saboteurs. Obermayer took part in this overlooked aspect of the war as a member of a group assigned to protect the pipeline that ran north across France from Normandy to the German border, feeding the tanks and equipment of General Patton's 3rd Army as it advanced on Berlin and fell subject to continuous attempts by avaricious Frenchmen to siphon off the fuel. As he writes in one of the book's brief retrospective essays, "I observed firsthand how effectively French saboteurs, both amateur and professional, slowed the forward progress of America's armies."

In addition to filling in such small but important facets of the war, Obermayer's letters are notable for the honest, straightforward manner in which this young man endeavored to stay in touch with his family, and for a warmth and respect toward his parents almost impossible to imagine in this day of instant messaging and hip-hop vernacular. Trying (unsuccessfully, as it turned out) to join the Normandy invasion, he writes to his father:

> Dear Daddy: . . . Today I signed on the dotted line and volunteered for the paratroops. I feel confident that the invasion will prove them to be the outstanding unit of the U.S. Army, as well as all modern armies. . . . I am writing to you at the office because I thought this might disturb Mother a little. I would rather have you tell her. Daddy, please believe that I am not trying to cause my parents extra worry and be inconsiderate. I am only doing what I think is right.

To be sure, young Obermayer had grown up in privileged circumstances. His father, a member of Philadelphia's German-Jewish upper class, was a prosperous lawyer, his mother one of America's first female research biologists. The local Jewish country club was central to the Obermayers' social round. At home, the family dressed for table and dined together every evening.

These letters offer an assured and surprisingly self-aware glimpse into that world as well. Especially interesting is young Obermayer's sense of his own Jewishness, which seems of a piece with his upbringing and, in contrast to some of the inner torments recorded in the pages of *G.I. Jews*, refreshingly untroubled.

In his matter-of-fact way, soldier Obermayer was a proud Jew. References to Passover seders missed, to Sabbath services attended, are easy and unstrained. He searches out synagogues wherever he can, and reports carefully on what he finds in them. No special concern is evinced for fitting in with the Gentiles in his barracks; stirred to anger by the fate of Europe's Jews, he presents no ponderous disquisitions on its sig-

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nificance. Throughout, he engages in an open, rolling discussion about Zionism, seeking arguments both for and against the establishment of a Jewish state and finally coming out squarely on the "pro" side.

For this natural pride in being Jewish, no less than in being brought up in Germantown, Pennsylvania, attending Dartmouth, and wearing the uniform of the United States Army, *Soldiering for Freedom* makes a worthwhile contribution to the genre of history in the first person.

Color Blind

When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America

by Ira Katznelson

Norton. 238 pp. $25.95

Reviewed by
Dan Seligman

AMONG MANY possible outcomes of the Supreme Court makeover now in progress is a new focus on affirmative action, also known as racial preference. This policy has had a long run as a hot-button issue in America; the questions swirling around it seem never to die, and never to get resolved. The Court itself had a singularly dismal day on June 23, 2003, when it served up two different decisions about admissions at the University of Michigan, ruling against racial preferences at the university's undergraduate college but upholding them at the law school.*

As presently practiced on campuses or in the workplace, affirmative action satisfies almost nobody. Conservatives tend to see the basic proposition as a series of elaborate, dishonest dodges designed to circumvent merit-based standards. Liberals, plainly less unhappy, see the existing preferences as inadequate. Either way, however, the argument itself has become a bit of a bore in recent years, and has been increasingly relegated to the intellectual sidelines.

Ira Katznelson wants to get the argument going again, and believes he has some new thoughts to bring to the table. About that, he could be right. A Left-leaning scholar based at Columbia, where he occupies an endowed chair in history and political science, Katznelson has in the past criticized modern liberalism as intellectually flabby and politically unprincipled, an obstacle to the truly egalitarian society he wishes to create. The surprise of this book is that the same critique of liberalism is central to his case for affirmative action.

THAT CASE leans heavily on history. Katznelson reminds us that affirmative action is customarily defended by liberals as an effort to undo the effects of many generations of black slavery and oppression. To remedy that injustice, as President Lyndon Johnson declared in a much quoted speech at Howard University in 1965, a policy of mere nondiscrimination would not be enough:

> You do not take a person who, for years, has been hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him up to the starting line of a race and then say, "you are free to compete with all the others," and still justly believe that you have been completely fair.

To Katznelson, however, President Johnson had it all wrong, and the phrase "hobbled by chains," implying as it did that without government intervention blacks would be simply incapable of making their way in the modern economy, was grievously misleading. To the contrary, he maintains, black America would long since have upgraded itself on its own had it not been for systematic betrayals by liberals themselves, and specifically by the Roosevelt and Truman administrations.

In successive chapters on welfare legislation, labor law, military segregation during World War II, and the postwar treatment of veterans, Katznelson demonstrates that the country's liberal Democratic leadership repeatedly deferred to the racists who controlled Southern politics and made possible the election of Democratic Presidents. Given their hammerlock on the party, the Southerners succeeded again and again in ensuring that even ostensibly color-blind programs would be administered at the local level; they thereby all but guaranteed preferential treatment of *whites*, especially but not exclusively in the South. A large case in point cited by Katznelson was the GI Bill of Rights, which, properly celebrated for its educational benefits, low-cost mortgages, and business loans, substantially bypassed black veterans.

According to Katznelson, Southern Democrats in Congress also saw to it that some of FDR's New-Deal legislation would simply not apply to blacks. He returns repeatedly to the fact that in the 1930's and 40's, maids and farm workers accounted for the great bulk of black employees. Yet the Wagner Act and other labor laws failed to protect union-organizing efforts in these occupations, which also went uncovered by Social Security or the new minimum-wage laws.

By the late 40's, white America was receiving an avalanche of benefits from the New Deal and veterans' programs, while black America, which needed far more, got far fewer. Were it not for this devastating injustice, Katznelson insists, Johnson could have delivered a very different speech at Howard. He could have talked about the emergence of a sizable black middle class, and have plausibly proposed nonracial solutions to the lingering problems of Southern poverty.

DAN SELIGMAN *is a contributing editor of* Forbes.

* See Carl Cohen, "Winks, Nods, Disguises—and Racial Preference," COMMENTARY, September 2003.

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But history took a different turn, Katznelson writes, which is why, today, we are in need of a remedy that will at last right the wrong. Affirmative action is that remedy, but until now it has lacked a compelling rationale. To supply one, Katznelson points to the famous Supreme Court decision in the 1978 case of *Bakke* v. *University of California*.

Speaking for the 5-4 majority in that case, Justice Lewis F. Powell held that, while outright quotas favoring black applicants were impermissible, it was acceptable in admissions and employment decisions to "take race into account"—indeed, to make it a "plus" factor. But Powell added that such preferences were to be allowed only in clearly defined circumstances. They had to be tightly linked to specified racial wrongs, not just generalized claims about racism; they had to be the least intrusive way of accomplishing the desired result; and they had to be a matter of compelling interest to the government. Unless these conditions of "strict scrutiny" were met, preferences would be barred.

In Katznelson's reading, these conditions are, in fact, readily satisfied by the history he has recounted. Irrational and indefensible discrimination against blacks during the Roosevelt and Truman administrations "constituted a massive transfer of privileges to white Americans." Once this record, hitherto totally ignored in debates on affirmative action, is brought to the fore and linked with Powell's logic (itself now a matter of "settled law"), the case for broad-based preferences becomes, he says, logically irresistible.

KATZNELSON IS at his best in the historical sections of this book, which will strike many readers as revelatory. But even there, much can be questioned. It seems wildly unrealistic, for example, to assume as Katznelson does that only Jim Crow intervention by Southern politicians in the 30's prevented maids and farm workers from being organized into unions. Seven decades and a civil-rights revolution later, the country's maids are still getting by without union contracts, as are most of the South's farm workers.

It is also hard to take seriously the book's repeated laments over FDR's decision to stick with a segregated military during World War II. The administration's policy did inarguably reduce blacks' opportunities to acquire new skills, and the integration of the armed forces was plainly required on any long-run calculation of the national interest. But to impose such an explosive social policy in the midst of a world war would have been madness.

In his concluding chapter, Katznelson labors to convince the reader that his basic case—affirmative action is justified because the disadvantaging of blacks in the Roosevelt and Truman years satisfies Powell's "strict-scrutiny" test—is a simple syllogism. But it can also be read as a simple *non sequitur*.

The problems begin with Powell's standards. After more than a quarter-century of debate over those standards, nobody really knows when it is and when it is not permissible to "take race into account." The message cumulatively conveyed by dozens of court decisions is that Powell's principles are but a starting point for judicial reasoning. The two 2003 Michigan cases alone generated thirteen different Supreme Court opinions, every one of them presumably consistent with Powell's standards.

A related problem is the considerable amount of time that has elapsed between the grievances Katznelson cites and the future remedy he proposes. How, in particular, are specific injuries to identifiable victims today to be traced back to the 1930's and 40's? In describing the workings of this and other features of his program—an exercise relegated to the book's final three pages—Katznelson becomes noticeably blurry.

One possibility, he suggests, would be grants to individuals whose parents or grandparents were harmed. A "less administratively burdensome" possibility would be "assertive federal policies" designed to help those "poor Americans who face conditions produced by the constellation of patterns of eligibility and administration the South placed inside the most important New Deal and Fair Deal programs." "Constellation of patterns"? This seems a long way from specificity.

TOWARD THE end of his book, Katznelson bemoans the fact that opponents of affirmative action have come to occupy the moral high ground. One reason for this, he observes, is that up until now the arguments made on behalf of the policy have been weak and inadequate. He adds:

> Perhaps because proponents of affirmative action have been unable to persuade most white Americans that it is a good idea, they have relied mainly on decisions in executive agencies and the courts, usually skipping the effort to win broad support either in public opinion or Congress.

There is a lot of truth in this, but it is not the whole truth. The fact is that at critical junctures, supporters of affirmative action have been extraordinarily lucky. Twice it appeared that a deeply divided Supreme Court was poised to reject the policy as inconsistent with a Constitution providing individual rights and disallowing group rights. And twice—with *Bakke* in 1978 and again with the Michigan law-school case in 2003—supporters of racial preferences found a nominally conservative swing voter on the Court with a rationale for splitting the difference and for opening the door to racial quotas. The first time it was Powell, the second time it was the now-retiring Sandra Day O'Connor.

The new Supreme Court is likely to be less sharply divided. If so, affirmative action might actually start to be an interesting subject once again.

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President Bush has appointed a commission to study tax reform and said that he wants to make his tax cuts permanent. However, no major tax reform will occur soon. One modest proposal for immediate reform is to make permanent a Bush tax cut that has been allowed to expire.

I am referring to the bonus depreciation provisions that expired on January 1, 2005, raising taxes for all businesses. Unfortunately, there were no headlines noting this tax increase, possibly because bonus depreciation is an issue that excites only tax economists and accountants. It is important to all, however, because bonus depreciation increases economic growth by encouraging firms to invest.

Under ordinary depreciation, every business, even a corner mom-and-pop grocery, deducts the cost of each investment over its lifetime. For example, if a business buys a $1 million machine that lasts for ten years, it garners a $100,000 tax deduction each year for ten years. Under bonus depreciation, in contrast, it receives a $500,000 "bonus" deduction at the time of purchase and takes a $50,000 deduction each year for ten years. The total tax deductions are equal, but bonus depreciation moves half the deductions to the time of purchase, a valuable change because a dollar today is better than a dollar next year or later. For a business in the 35 percent tax bracket that can borrow at 6 percent, currently the prime rate, bonus depreciation increases the after-tax value of these deductions from $273,059 to $311,530, an increase of more than $38,000. The value is greater for firms that pay higher interest rates and for those constrained by a lack of cash.

To put this in perspective, consider expensing, where the entire purchase price is immediately deducted. With expensing, the government essentially becomes a partner. For example, if a firm is in the 35 percent bracket, the government pays 35 percent of the purchase price through expensing and receives 35 percent of future earnings in taxes, essentially relieving the business of all taxes on the income from its 65 percent. Furthermore, if all investments were expensed and deducted from income, then the tax system would become a consumption tax because consumption equals income minus investment. Therefore, the bonus depreciation provision in force in 2004 cut the tax rate on income from qualifying investments by half and brought the tax code closer to a consumption tax.

Bonus depreciation was enacted in 2003 to help the economy recover from the recession. Many economists have correctly questioned this rationale. The long-run effectiveness of bonus depreciation, and the similar investment tax credit first enacted by the Kennedy-Johnson administration, however, is unquestioned. My work shows that these measures stimulate the economy more per dollar of lost revenue than other kinds of tax cuts and that the benefits are shared by both business and labor because the new investments increase worker productivity and wages.

Bonus depreciation is a simple tax cut, benefits economic growth, and has historically had bipartisan support. Let's bring it back now.

—Kenneth L. Judd

Kenneth L. Judd is the Paul H. Bauer Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution.

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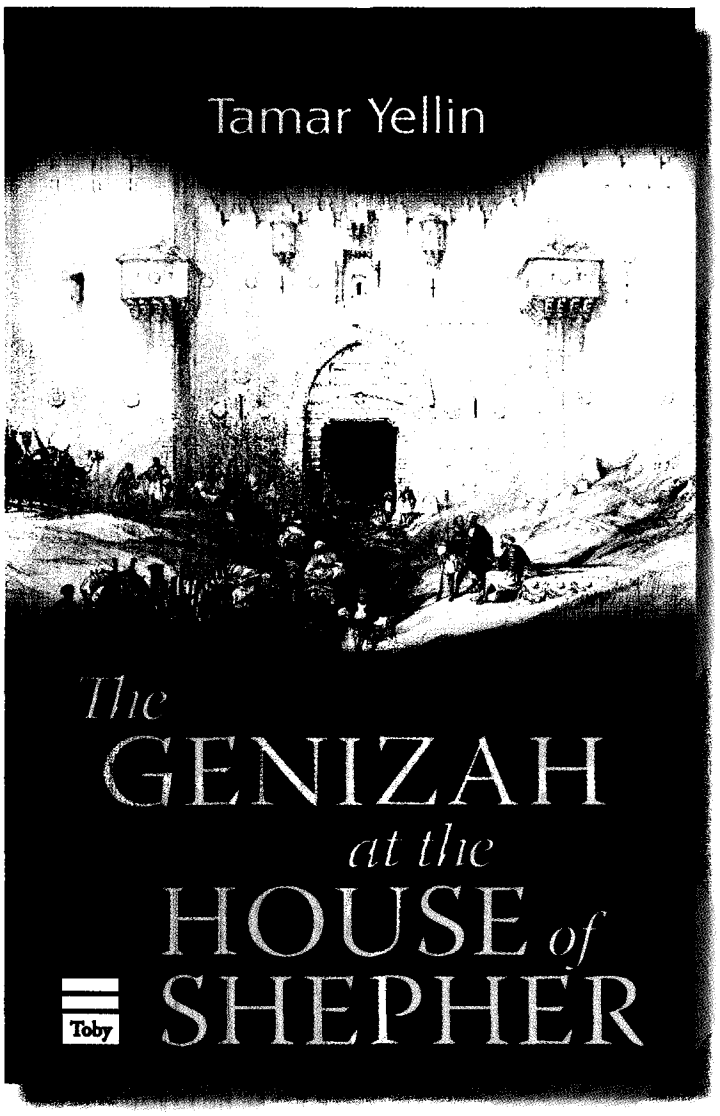

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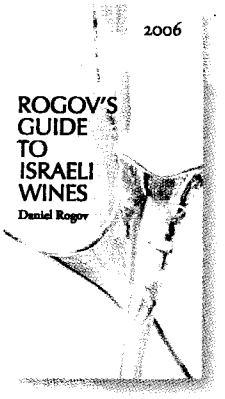

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